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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the effectiveness of current programs and personnel policies in federal agencies with respect to foreign language needs. Overall, the United States has about 16,700 federal positions requiring language skills. The General Accounting Office (GAO) found that the foreign language competence of American personnel abroad is less than adequate for maximum effectiveness and efficiency, though some agencies are better than others. This inadequacy is attributed to the fact that the system for defining foreign language skill requirements is insufficient or nonexistent, and improvements are needed in foreign language assignments and in training policy and procedure. Low foreign language proficiency limits job performance, but efforts by federal agencies to meet language needs are hampered by: (1) inadequate planning which places insufficiently skilled people in language-related positions, (2) inadequate language training, (3) unforeseen turnover in these language-related positions, and (4) the fact that second language skill is only one of many capabilities an employee needs. Recommendations are given to help improve personnel policies and practices, language training programs, and the process for determining foreign language requirements. (PJM)

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ED192559

REPORT BY THE

Comptroller General

OF THE UNITED STATES

More Competence In Foreign Languages Needed By Federal Personnel Working Overseas

About 30,000 positions in the Federal Government require a proficiency in at least one of 45 foreign languages; most of these positions are overseas.

Foreign affairs agencies are required by law to maintain systems for identifying and staffing positions which require foreign language skills. Approximately 70 percent of the employees in overseas positions identified by the systems have adequate foreign language skills, but improvements in the systems are needed.

Other agencies with Americans abroad are not required to identify positions requiring foreign language skills and, except for the Department of Defense and the Foreign Agricultural Service, have not done so, but they should to ensure an adequate foreign language capability abroad.

FL011602

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ID-80-31
APRIL 15, 1980

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-198078

The Honorable Frank Church
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Clement J. Zablocki
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives

This report discusses the effectiveness of current programs and personnel practices with respect to foreign language needs in all Federal agencies. This report was prepared in response to the conference report on H.R. 3363. Also, as agreed with your offices, we collected and incorporated additional information on language programs (as requested from agencies in the conference report on H.R. 3324).

We did not obtain written comments from the agencies, however, we did discuss the matters covered in the report with agency officials and included their comments in the report where appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and to the heads of the Federal departments and agencies.

Comptroller General
of the United States

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE CHAIRMEN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MORE COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES NEEDED BY FEDERAL PERSONNEL WORKING OVERSEAS

D I G E S T

A number of Congressmen have expressed concern about foreign language skills of U.S. personnel assigned abroad. They questioned whether those skills are less than needed to effectively carry out U.S. interests. The conference report on the bill to authorize appropriations for the Department of State and related agencies for fiscal years 1980 and 1981 (H.R. 3363) contained a request that GAO review the Federal Government's foreign language programs. (See p. 1.)

GAO found that the foreign language competency of U.S. personnel assigned abroad is less than required for maximum effectiveness and efficiency. The degree of language capability varies from agency to agency within the foreign affairs community. For instance the Department of State, International Communication Agency, and Agency for International Development had 71, 70 and 73 percent of their respective foreign language designated positions adequately filled in 1979. Within agencies language capabilities also vary among languages. Most agencies were somewhat successful at meeting skill requirements for languages such as Spanish and French, but had problems filling positions requiring more difficult languages such as Arabic and Korean.

This report discusses the foreign language competency of U.S. Federal personnel assigned abroad. While its primary emphasis is on civilian personnel, some attention is given to Defense personnel. At intelligence-related agencies--CIA, National Security Agency, and certain Defense activities--GAO's review was limited to gathering general data on language requirements. Statistical data in the report on language essential positions are not always comparable because many of the agencies which provided the data use different approaches for determining language essential positions and assign different skill levels to positions. (See ch. 1.)

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U.S. FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS ARE GREAT

The Government is the United States' largest employer of people with foreign language skills. In fiscal year 1979 about 16,700 Federal overseas positions required a competency in at least one of over 45 foreign languages. These statistics do not include about 7,100 Peace Corps volunteers or about 6,500 domestic positions. (See ch. 1.)

Eight principal Federal agencies have positions abroad which require Americans with foreign language skills for programs in educational and cultural exchange, agricultural assistance, military sales and other areas, not to mention the conduct of foreign affairs. During fiscal year 1979 Federal agencies spent $[illegible]2 million training 6,235 people in foreign languages. Another $7.4 million was spent training 4,560 Peace Corps volunteers and trainees overseas. (See ch. 1.)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILL REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY DEFINED

Federal agencies' systems and procedures for defining foreign language skill requirements are inadequate or in some cases nonexistent. Most agencies that require a large number of people with language proficiency use general criteria to determine their actual needs. Other agencies--primarily those with lesser language skill requirements--have no review procedures or criteria for identifying the language competency they need for overseas positions. (See ch. 5.)

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AFFECTS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Some Federal employees need foreign language competence to perform their jobs effectively. How much an employee's performance is affected by a lack of required language competence is hard to determine. However, a substantial number of persons who did not have the language competency required for their jobs and their superiors said that low foreign language proficiency limits job performance. (See ch. 2.)

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENTS AND TRAINING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Federal agencies that need people skilled in foreign languages to serve abroad face a number of factors which reduce their ability to meet those needs. Some major factors are:

--Language capability is only one of many qualifications an employee needs.

--Many employees' potential for career advancement is based largely on factors other than language ability.

--Illnesses and unanticipated separations cause unexpected vacancies.

--A high percentage of Defense's foreign language skill activities involves a significant effort to train personnel who may not reenlist, thus reducing opportunities to use acquired language skills. (See ch. 3.)

Efforts to improve Federal agencies' abilities to meet language needs are generally hindered because:

--Pre-assignment planning is inadequate and agencies fail to adequately assess alternatives to assigning personnel with less than required language skills.

--Standard training periods at the Foreign Service Institute do not always allow enough time for students to attain the required proficiency for their assigned positions.

--Language training courses do not meet job-related needs of certain assignments.

--Some overseas post programs are poorly utilized. (See ch. 4.)

The Foreign Service does not have a policy of reassigning officers to posts although this does occur on occasion. Therefore, there is no program for maintaining the foreign language skills previously acquired. (See ch. 4.)

COST TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE COMPETENCY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES NEEDED

Five Federal agencies have estimated that it would cost about $34 million above their fiscal year 1980 budget request to meet 100 percent of their language requirements. Only one agency suggested that a change is needed in legislation. That change related to additional authority to pay travel costs needed to provide language training for dependents of Federal employees. (See ch. 6.)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Foreign language competence among Federal employees has improved since the early 1970s when GAO first reported on the subject. However, improvements are still needed in a number of agencies. Agencies have not adequately defined foreign language requirements, and certain policies and practices have resulted in persons being assigned to positions for which they do not have the required language proficiency. A foreign language deficiency can adversely affect the performance of employees and cause significant problems in the operation of Federal programs and activities abroad.

GAO recommends a number of specific actions to improve the Federal Government's ability to meet foreign language needs. For details on recommended actions to improve

--personnel policies and practices, see page 32,

--foreign language training programs, see pages 45 and 46, and

--the process by which foreign language requirements are determined, see page 58.

AGENCY COMMENTS

GAO discussed the contents of this report with the principal agencies involved and included their comments as appropriate. In general they agreed with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. (See ch. 7.)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AID	Agency for International Development
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DAS	Defense Attache System
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DOD	Department of Defense
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
GAO	General Accounting Office
GSA	General Services Administration
ICA	International Communication Agency
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LDP	language designated position
MAAG	Military Assistance and Advisory Group

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The bill authorizing appropriations for the Department of State, the International Communication Agency, and the Board for International Broadcasting (H.R. 3363) was signed into law by President Carter on August 15, 1979. The related report of the committee of the conference for the bill contained the following language.

> "*** The committee of conference *** requests the General Accounting Office to conduct a study which evaluates the effectiveness of current programs and personnel practices with regard to foreign language needs in all agencies and to recommend standards for designating foreign language-required positions for United States personnel.
>
> "Such study shall include an estimate of the costs, if any, to be incurred in upgrading the language proficiency of U.S. personnel abroad. Within 8 months of the date of enactment of this legislation, the General Accounting Office shall submit a report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and to the House Foreign Affairs Committee containing the results of this study and recommendations for correcting any deficiencies which might exist."

The report of the committee on the conference for the International Development Cooperation Act of 1979 (H.R. 3324) also stipulated that

> "*** The committee of conference requests the heads of agencies responsible for maintaining missions abroad to review their requirements for language competence and area studies, and to report to the Congress any need for statutory changes which would improve the language capability and area knowledge of U.S. missions abroad."

The Chairmen, Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committees, asked us to collect and incorporate into our report the information they had requested of the heads of agencies in the International Development Cooperation legislation. The affected agencies/departments were so notified in a letter transmitting our questionnaire seeking information on their foreign language programs.

This report discusses the foreign language competency of U.S. Federal personnel assigned in foreign countries. The four specific areas of congressional concern are discussed in other sections as follows:

--The extent to which Federal agencies are staffing language designated positions (LDPs) with personnel competent in the required language (see ch. 2).

--The adequacy of Federal agencies' assignments and training practices and procedures concerning LDPs (see chs. 3 and 4).

--The need to improve the criteria used by Federal agencies to designate those positions requiring competence in a foreign language (see ch. 5).

--The estimated amount of additional costs and legislative changes, if any, necessary to upgrade the language proficiency of U.S. personnel abroad (see ch. 6).

While the report's primary emphasis is on civilian personnel, some attention is given to Department of Defense (DOD) personnel. Our review at intelligence-related agencies, National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and certain DOD activities, was limited to gathering general language requirement data. We gathered and presented similar information on domestic positions requiring foreign language skills. Statistical data presented in this report on language essential positions are not always comparable, because many of the various agencies which provided the data use different approaches for determining language essential positions and different skill levels are assigned to positions.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE NEEDS

The precise number of persons needed to read, analyze and speak a particular language at an established competence level at a particular point in time is not known. The ever-increasing need to communicate and conduct U.S. foreign affairs in other languages, however, has been recognized since the early days of our Nation.

Benjamin Franklin, as the U.S. representative in Paris during the Revolutionary War, complained that he could not speak or even understand French very well. Over 100 years passed before the language problem received recognition and attempts were made to reach a solution. An initial step was taken in 1924 when an independent, nonpolitical Foreign Service was established. Following World War II, Foreign

Service officers began dealing with more people in foreign countries on a wide range of postwar programs. Language, however, continued to be a problem. On November 13, 1946, another step in solving the language problem was taken when the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and its School of Language Studies were opened.

Events during the next 30 years continually reinforced the need for foreign language competence of U.S. personnel. During the 1950s, the Soviet Union emerged as a world power igniting the space and arms races. In the 1960s, many African and Asian nations gained independence and made their own native languages their official language. During the 1970s, independence and interdependence among all nations grew to where no nation could survive alone. Diplomacy has changed and become more complex than when Benjamin Franklin voiced his complaints about language needs. Today the United States operates embassies and consulates in many countries around the world where languages other than English are spoken and Mr. Franklin's complaint is still applicable today to many U.S. representatives serving abroad.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

When Benjamin Franklin made his comments about foreign language skills, he might well have been the only official U.S. representative in Paris. Today, most embassies have representatives of many agencies, including not only the Department of State, but the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Treasury and Justice; Agency for International Development (AID); and International Communication Agency (ICA). The U.S. Government is the largest user of people with foreign language skills. In 1979, the U.S. Government had about 13,600 people performing overseas work who needed various degrees of foreign language competence to perform their jobs. Approximately 3,400 language essential positions overseas were vacant. The following table shows the number of U.S. personnel in positions requiring language competence:

Number of Language Essential Positions (note a)

	Language essential positions		
	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Principal overseas positions:			
DOD (note b)	13,597	10,752 c/	3,079
Civilian agencies	3,113	2,792	321
	16,710	13,544	3,400
Other overseas positions:			
Peace Corps (note d)	7,072	7,072	--
Total overseas	23,782	20,616	3,400
Domestic positions	6,497	6,175	322
Total language essential positions	30,279	26,791 c/	3,722

a/Excludes CIA and some other intelligence positions.
b/Includes some domestic positions essentially performing overseas work.
c/This includes 234 positions which are filled but not authorized.
d/These are volunteers and trainees who are not permanent U.S. Government employees.

U.S. personnel abroad speak a wide variety of languages which are generally divided into two groups--world languages and hard languages. World languages are French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish and German. All other languages are classified as "hard" (see app. I). This term usually denotes the degree of difficulty to learn or master the language.

The proper mixture of people, languages, and proficiency levels is extremely difficult to determine for several reasons. The rapidity and unpredictability of world changes are probably the greatest deterrent to developing precise language-need programs. A DOD official said that if someone could predict the next world crisis, he could plan his language training. Without such foresight, projected training needs are only an estimate. Other reasons affecting the mixture are (1) changes in management both at headquarters and embassies whereby the priority of language capability may change; (2) work styles of people and their concepts of how

to accomplish assignments (necessity of contact with foreign officials); and (3) the rotation--sometimes referred to as the "revolving door"--assignment process.

LANGUAGE TRAINING AVAILABLE

Language training for U.S. personnel serving abroad is done at several facilities:

--Foreign Service Institute;

--Defense Language Institute (DLI); and

--commercial and academic facilities.

The Peace Corps also provides training for most of its volunteers in the countries to which they are assigned.

The Foreign Service Institute's School of Language Studies trains most Federal civilian personnel for language designated positions overseas and manages the language classes at overseas posts. The Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Center, administered by the Department of the Army, trains most military and civilian employees of the armed services and Defense agencies for language essential positions overseas and in the United States.

Many agencies also use commercial and academic facilities to provide language training in special situations. The Foreign Service Institute, the Defense Language Institute, and the Peace Corps provide most of the Government's foreign language training.

Foreign Service Institute

In 1979, over 30 Federal agencies participated in FSI foreign language training programs. Approximately 1,472 employees and 298 of their dependents attended classes in 45 foreign languages at the FSI facilities in Washington during fiscal year 1979 at a cost of about $15.1 million.

The Foreign Service Institute was established by the Foreign Service Act of 1946 and, among other things, provides training for Federal employees engaged in foreign affairs activities and for members of their families. The School of Language Studies provides both full-time and part-time language instruction. FSI's standard full-time programs generally last 20 weeks for world languages and 44 weeks for hard languages.

FSI also operates field schools in Yokohama, Japan, and Tunis, Tunisia, where the hard languages of Japanese and Arabic are taught. A former FSI school for Chinese is currently administered by the American Institute in Taiwan. Normally 2 years are required to reach a professional proficiency in these languages. FSI conducts 24- and 44-week courses in these languages in Washington, D.C., followed by a second year of training at one of the field schools.

In addition to the courses offered in Washington and at the field schools, FSI is responsible for language classes offered at about 180 overseas posts. Over 5,500 employees and dependents representing about 30 agencies attended those classes in 1979. The purposes of the post language programs are to (1) enable underqualified incumbents in essential language positions to meet the requirement of their jobs, (2) assist other personnel in achieving job-level or elementary proficiency, and (3) help adult dependents in meeting community and representational needs.

Most of the overseas training is given part-time, in groups, at the embassies and consulates. Employees of any Federal agency may participate on a reimbursable basis. Dependents of eligible employees may attend also on a reimbursable basis if space is available.

As discussed in our 1973 1/ and 1976 2/ reports, the posts' part-time programs are not intended to be, nor are they effective as, substitutes for intensive language training before assignment. These programs are generally successful in teaching elementary and courtesy level language skills but are usually not adequate to develop proficiency required for language positions. The posts' language programs, however, can help to maintain, refresh, or improve skills.

FSI uses testing procedures for both measuring an individual's aptitude for learning foreign languages and an individual's proficiency in a specified language. The

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1/"Need to Improve Language Training Programs and Assignments for U.S. Government Personnel Overseas" (B-176049, Jan. 22, 1973).

2/"Improvement Needed in Language Training and Assignments for U.S. Personnel Overseas" (ID-76-19, June 16, 1976).

aptitude test is not an absolute indicator of ability in all languages; however, it does show general abilities to learn other languages. The proficiency test is based on a 5-point scale and is used to measure speaking and reading capabilities, as follows.

1. ELEMENTARY PROFICIENCY

S-1 Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements.

R-1 Can read simplest connected written material, authentic or especially prepared for testing.

2. LIMITED WORKING PROFICIENCY

S-2 Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.

R-2 Can read simple authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context.

3. PROFESSIONAL PROFICIENCY

S-3 Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

R-3 Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence, reports and technical material in his own special field.

4. DISTINGUISHED PROFICIENCY

S-4 Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.

R-4 Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.

5. NATIVE OR BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY

S-5 Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

R-5 Reading proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native.

Many agencies use the FSI proficiency scale to designate language requirements for positions overseas. For example, an agency determines that a certain political officer position requires a proficiency of S-3/R-3. This means whoever holds that position should have received that score on FSI's proficiency test. This type of position is referred to as a language designated position or a language essential position throughout our report. How well the various agencies determine and meet position requirements for foreign languages are discussed in the remaining chapters of this report.

Defense Language Institute
Foreign Language Center

The Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Center, in Monterey, California, provides language training for the entire Department of Defense. The Institute was established in 1963 and is under the administrative control of the Department of the Army. In fiscal year 1979, DLI trained about 4,000 persons at a cost of about $11 million.

The Institute conducts full-time intensive language training and provides technical control for all other language training conducted in the Department of Defense. Basic DLI resident courses are to develop functional working level competencies in listening, comprehension, speaking, reading and writing to prepare students for job-specific language-oriented assignments. Intermediate and advanced courses at DLI provide training for increasing the functional linguistic capabilities of DOD personnel.

DLI also develops non-resident language training programs for people in the field (primarily in intelligence activities) to regain, maintain or enhance language proficiency required by jobs and missions. Non-resident language programs also include short language and orientation courses for military personnel and their dependents. The non-resident language training usually conducted by military commands is provided to approximately 100,000 U.S. personnel each year.

Over half of DLI's resident students are from the various military services. Most of the remainder are associated with other branches of the intelligence community. A few civil service employees of various U.S. Government agencies also attend DLI classes.

Language training of Federal employees in commercial facilities

In fiscal year 1979 approximately 430 Federal employees and dependents received language training at commercial facilities. The total cost for this training was about $3.3 million of which about $390,000 was for tuition. The remainder was for salaries and other expenses. In addition, some Federal employees studied foreign languages part time at academic institutions.

Twelve departments and agencies that responded to our questionnaire said they provided language training to employees through arrangements with commercial institutions in fiscal year 1979. They indicated that the following were the primary reasons the training was obtained from these facilities rather than a Government source, the

--classes were offered at the time employees needed to take them,

--classes were more conveniently located,

--facilities provided highly specialized vocabulary not covered in a Government course, and

--proficiency of the student in the language required specialized instruction.

AID has an indefinite quantity contract with a commercial facility for language training. This contract allows other Federal agencies to obtain training for a negotiated rate. This represents the only interagency contract for language training although other agencies have individual commercial contracts to help meet their own language needs.

The Peace Corps uses commercial language facilities overseas to train many of its volunteers. Also, commercial facilities stateside provide language training for a few of the persons in staff positions. During 1979, 22 people in staff positions and 4,560 volunteers and trainees received language training costing about $7.4 million.

CHAPTER 2

OVERSEAS LANGUAGE DESIGNATED POSITIONS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY STAFFED

The Federal Government has not fully satisfied its overseas foreign language requirements despite a greater emphasis on identifying and quantifying needs and providing language training. However, greater success has been achieved filling language essential positions located in the United States.

Overseas language essential positions are often staffed by persons lacking the required foreign language competence in the majority of agencies we reviewed. For example, persons who did not have the full language proficiency required filled 29 percent of the State Department's overseas language designated positions, 27 percent of AID's, 30 percent of ICA's, and 32 percent of DOD's.

In contrast, six Federal agencies with domestic civilian language essential positions reported that most of those positions were filled with language qualified personnel.

OVERSEAS CIVILIAN LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL POSITIONS NOT FILLED ADEQUATELY

Eight civilian agencies account for most of the civilian language essential positions overseas. They are State, AID, ICA, Peace Corps, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Each of five other agencies maintain between 1 and 20 civilian language designated positions overseas. The CIA also has language essential positions overseas, but we were unable to obtain information on them.

In measuring the success of agencies in filling their LDPs, we rated each agency against its own self-identified requirements. Agencies identify language essential positions and define their skill requirements in different ways. Therefore, LDP statistics in this report are not comparable.

Listed below are the number of full-time, permanent overseas positions, the number of language essential positions designated by the eight organizations as of September 1979, the number of filled LDPs, and the number and percentage of LDPs filled by employees having the required proficiency.

Civilian Positions Overseas
(full-time, permanent)

Agency	Total U.S. positions overseas (note a)	Authorized LDPs	Occupied positions		
			Filled	Adequately filled	
				Number	Percent
State	5,712	1,320	1,216	858	71
AID	1,515	687	541	394	73
ICA	1,051	421	396	276	70
DEA	292	204	194	189	97
Peace Corps (staff positions)	159	72	64	56	88
IRS	N.A.	168	168	168	100
FAS	133	60	59	21	36
APHIS	118	112	90	73	81

Note a: Includes all authorized overseas American positions, both professional and support.

Agencies use different approaches for defining their foreign language needs

Section 578 of the Foreign Service Act of 1946, as amended, requires State and ICA to formally designate overseas officer positions that require a "useful knowledge" of a local language. Section 625(g) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, requires that AID do the same. State and ICA have defined "useful knowledge" as speaking and reading ability at the 2 or 3 proficiency level. AID defined it as only speaking ability at the 2 or 3 proficiency level.

No other agencies are required by legislation to formally designate language essential positions, however, some, such as FAS do. DEA does not. To determine overall foreign language needs we distributed questionnaires to all agencies we identified having positions requiring knowledge of a foreign language. In the questionnaire, we asked these agencies to identify such positions even if they do not normally do so for their own planning purposes.

Most agencies that identified language essential positions used the 5-point FSI proficiency scale to define the level of proficiency required. However, agencies defined their needs at different skill levels.

LDP statistics do not reflect the total language capability of an agency or post

Although LDP statistics are a useful indicator of an agency's overall language capability, statistics do not give a complete picture because they (1) do not account for LDP incumbents who do not meet the full language requirements of their jobs but do have some knowledge of the required language; (2) do not include personnel in non-LDPs who know the local language; and (3) include some LDP incumbents' outdated test scores which may not accurately state their current ability.

Some LDP incumbents lacking the required competence may be very close to meeting the requirements of their positions. As part of our review we interviewed 195 Federal employees filling LDP positions in 12 foreign countries. In four Latin American countries we visited, 42 persons lacked the required language skill. Twenty-one of these (50 percent) were within a half point of meeting the requirement of their positions. For example, some people with S-2+/R-2+ skills were in S-3/R-3 positions. Only two LDP incumbents had no proficiency in the required language.

In addition to the partially proficient LDP incumbents, a post's total language competence may include language-qualified persons who are not in LDPs. These people are not accounted for in LDP data and may represent a considerable pool of talent at some posts. For example, in the four Latin American posts, 31 employees in jobs that were not language designated had professional proficiency (S-3/R-3). Therefore, their skills were in addition to those represented by the 218 people filling LDPs at these posts.

Test scores may not accurately represent LDP incumbents' current ability. Language students are usually tested when they complete their training; however, 2 or 3 years may pass before they are retested. In the meantime, employees' language abilities may have improved through usage of the language in their daily work, but test scores would not necessarily reflect such improvements.

Agencies have greater difficulty filling LDPs in the hard languages

As discussed in chapter 1, languages can generally be divided into 2 groups--world languages and hard languages. The world languages are easier for Americans to learn and

are more likely to be re-used in an officer's career. For example, the standard FSI course to prepare an officer for an S-3/R-3 in Spanish is 20 weeks, but it takes almost 2 years to reach the same proficiency level in Japanese. Moreover, there are many more jobs which require Spanish than Japanese. The State Department has over 400 Spanish LDPs in 20 countries, compared to only 21 Japanese LDPs--all in Japan.

In part, because of the differences between world and hard languages, agencies have

--designated a greater percentage of LDPs at posts where a world language is spoken,

--set higher proficiency level requirements in world languages, and

--had more success in adequately filling world language LDPs.

On a sample basis, we made a comparative analysis of the rates at which world language requirements are filled versus the rates at which hard languages are filled. Of the 1,778 filled LDPs requiring proficiency in French and Spanish, an average 77 percent were adequately filled. Only 50 percent of the same agencies' LDPs requiring proficiencies in Arabic and Korean were adequately filled.

Agencies' compliance with LDP requirements varies

Agencies have had varying degrees of success in filling LDPs with language qualified personnel.

State

State has staffed 71 percent of its occupied LDPs with language qualified personnel. This represents a slight change from the January 1978 rate of 70 percent.

The State Department's compliance rate has fluctuated between 55 and 74 percent since the LDP system was established in 1963. State's analysis of its compliance rate shows that when there has been a substantial increase in LDPs, the rate has dropped for a year or two reflecting the training needed to bring the positions into compliance. Similarly, when the number of LDPs has been reduced or remained the same over several years, the compliance level has generally increased.

The State Department acknowledged that the 1979 compliance rate is clearly short of what the system is capable of producing, but pointed out that more than half of the LDP incumbents who were not in compliance, actually could speak the required language at the 2 or better level of proficiency.

Only 1,729 of State's 5,712 overseas positions are foreign service officer positions. The others are staff personnel in various support activities. Seventy-eight percent of State's officer positions are LDPs. Within the officer ranks, economic/commercial and political officers perform the reporting and analysis functions and have the most essential need for foreign language skills. State officials said that incumbents of all LDPs should speak the required languages, and that language skills are even more essential in the reporting and analysis functions. An analysis of the language competence of officers in those 2 functions (representing 41 percent of all State LDPs) showed 72 percent of those officers meet the language qualifications for their jobs.

State has filled 864 positions at the S-3/R-3 level. This represents about 71 percent of its total filled LDPs. The rest are at lower levels. In January 1979 the Department had language essential positions in 42 languages.

AID

AID has staffed 73 percent of its occupied LDPs with language qualified persons. An additional 11 percent of the LDP incumbents were within one-half point of their position's language requirement. Since 1977 both the number of LDPs and the compliance rate has remained at about the same level. AID positions require speaking ability only. Fifty-nine percent of AID's LDPs require an S-3 proficiency, the rest an S-2 proficiency.

Ninety-two percent of AID's LDPs are in French and Spanish. Worldwide, there are only 54 requirements in languages other than French and Spanish, of which 38 are for Indonesian. AID's statistics only account for permanent full-time employees. AID also employs many contract personnel overseas whose language competence was not a part of our review.

ICA

ICA has staffed 70 percent of its occupied LDPs with language qualified persons. This represents a significant increase over ICA's 1975 compliance rate of 58 percent. In 1976, when we reported on our review of ICA's language competence, 1/ all of ICA's LDPs required an S-3/R-3 proficiency. Since then, ICA regraded some position requirements at the 2 proficiency level. Currently, 24 percent of ICA's 421 LDPs require less than S-3/R-3 level skills. ICA has designated language essential positions in 34 languages.

Other agencies

DEA has staffed 97 percent of its occupied LDPs with persons who meet the language requirement. It has LDPs in 12 languages.

Eighty-eight percent of the Peace Corps staff LDPs are filled with language-qualified persons. Peace Corps staff are full-time Federal employees who may serve up to 5 years. Most are hired with required language ability. These LDPs are in four languages and require speaking proficiency only. Ten positions in the Latin American region require an S-4 proficiency, the others are at the S-3 and S-2 levels. In addition to the staff, there are about 7,100 volunteers in over 60 countries. Most volunteers speak the language of the area in which they are serving. The Peace Corps teaches over 100 foreign languages, very few of which are spoken by other Federal employees abroad. We did not include volunteers on the chart of Overseas Civilian Positions on page 11 because volunteers are not employees of the Federal Government. However, volunteer training is provided by the Government and this is discussed in chapter 4.

The 168 IRS positions all require a knowledge of Spanish and are filled by personnel hired with native speaking ability (S-5/R-5). IRS has a compliance rate of 100 percent.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service are both elements of the Department of Agriculture. All of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service overseas requirements are for Spanish and

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1/"Improvement Needed in Language Training and Assignments for U.S. Personnel Overseas" (ID-76-19; June 16, 1976).

the Service has filled 81 percent of the occupied positions with language qualified personnel. The Foreign Agricultural Service has requirements in 10 languages, most at the S-3/R-3 level. Only 36 percent of its occupied LDPs are filled with persons meeting the language requirements at the time of their assignment.

EFFECT OF INADEQUATE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Officials of Federal agencies serving overseas are often limited in their ability to effectively carry out their responsibilities because of insufficient language skills. We interviewed employees occupying LDP and non-LDP positions. Many officers described the consequences of their lack of language skills. The following examples indicate the adverse effects which can occur because of insufficient language capabilities.

Department of State

--A consular officer said that he uses an interpreter for approximately 20 percent of his contacts with local nationals, some of whom are reluctant to deal through an interpreter.

--An administrative officer occupying an S-3/R-3 LDP lacks confidence with his S-2+/R-2+ language proficiency. When dealing with his local national employees he often needs an interpreter, which creates an uneasiness among his employees, many of whom distrust one another.

--An economic and commercial officer who does not meet the S-3/R-3 proficiency level of his position said that he must take an officer with a proficiency level of S-3/R-3 with him when he contacts local officials because a language qualified person is needed to get through security checkpoints and to assist in conducting meetings. Consequently, two people are required to do the job of one language-qualified person.

--A regional security officer occupying a non-LDP said that his position requires frequent contact with the local police and the bodyguards assigned to the Ambassador, none of whom speak English.

--Consular officers at another post said that it is difficult to get the true meaning of a conversation when working through a translator. This is a problem when conducting visa interviews and dealing

with host government officials on behalf of U.S. citizens.

International Communication Agency

--An ICA officer who is in an S-2/R-0 LDP but with no proficiency in the local language said about 50 percent of his contacts speak little English. Because he does not speak the local language, he said he cannot read the local newspaper and missed opportunities for developing helpful contacts.

Military

--A Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group officer in an S-3/R-3 LDP but with no local language capability, said he often has a feeling of being "left out" when using a translator. As part of the Foreign Military Sales team he makes inspection tours and observes military training to see how U.S.-provided equipment is being used. During these inspection tours, he uses a translator when responding to questions asked by local officials. Because of this he feels his rapport with local officials has developed slowly and his communication with them is less than adequate.

--An assistant air attache serving in an S-3/R-3 LDP has had no language training. He needs language ability to handle situations at local airports such as dealing with security guards, ground handling crews and other non-English speaking individuals. In addition, he needs to know the host country language in order to communicate with non-English speaking attaches from other countries.

We also interviewed some LDP incumbents who felt that they perform their duties quite adequately with a language proficiency lower than the required level. For example, a consular officer, rated S-1+/R-1 in a position requiring the S-3/R-3 level said that he has not experienced any significant problems due to lack of proficiency. He believes he communicates in an effective manner, and that he is fluent in what he calls "street Spanish" even though he was tested well below the level needed for his position. Other LDP incumbents without the required level also felt their lack of proficiency had not detracted from the quality of their performance.

MOST CIVILIAN LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL DOMESTIC POSITIONS ARE ADEQUATELY FILLED

Six civilian agencies account for 96 percent of the approximately 6,200 Federal domestic civilian positions filled that require knowledge of a foreign language. These are the (1) Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), (2) Library of Congress, (3) Voice of America, which is part of ICA, (4) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), (5) General Services Administration (GSA), and (6) Foreign Service Institute. There are 17 additional Federal agencies, each of which has 50 or fewer language essential positions. This section excludes civilians working for the military services and in intelligence positions.

Domestic Civilian Positions
(full-time, permanent)

	Number of occupied positions		
	Having language requirement	Adequately filled	
		Number	Percent
INS	4,000	3,800	95
Library of Congress	N.A.	1,284	N.A.
Voice of America (ICA)	564	524	93
FBI	226	170	75
GSA	108	107	99
FSI	65	65	100

Many of these domestic positions differ significantly from the overseas positions requiring language skills in that they (1) are often filled by personnel hired with the required language ability rather than by those trained by the agency; (2) require a higher level of language proficiency than the overseas positions; (3) are filled by domestic personnel not required to rotate assignments like overseas personnel (many incumbents work with one language throughout their careers); and (4) are required to perform a variety of functions.

Domestic civilian personnel are often hired with the high level of proficiency required

Many people in domestic civilian language essential positions have the required language skills when hired. Some persons--for example, announcers at the Voice of America and language instructors at the Foreign Service Institute--must have native speaking ability.

There are also some domestic positions which do not require a high level of proficiency. For example, the INS considers personnel to be language qualified when they complete the required course of training. For the approximately 2,200 Border Patrol employees of INS, this means a 16-week program of which 25 to 30 percent is language training. INS does not specify the proficiency level required for its language essential positions.

Civilian personnel in domestic jobs perform a variety of functions

The approximately 6,200 language essential civilian positions filled in the United States require a wide variety of skills ranging from the ability to speak like a native to the ability to translate written materials. The functions performed depend on the work of the agencies. For example, INS employees who patrol the U.S. border with Mexico speak limited Spanish; language-qualified Library of Congress employees acquire and process foreign materials, assist foreign visitors to the Library and translate material for other Government agencies; and Voice of America personnel write and/or translate material and announce radio programs.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL POSITIONS NOT FILLED ADEQUATELY

The Department of Defense has about 13,600 authorized language essential positions of which about 10,800 are filled. Of the filled positions, about 68 percent (7,333) are filled at the required proficiency level. These DOD statistics are for all the branches of service and include all the DOD employees performing overseas work.

The Department of Defense trains people to speak and understand foreign languages in order to meet the requirements of military duties. Most requirements for intensive training in foreign languages are in the fields of military intelligence and communication, the Defense attache program, and the military missions and advisory groups. Most of the positions are for the enlisted ranks and most are in the Army.

Although DOD has no legislative requirement to designate language positions, it does have formal guidelines for determining language requirements and proficiency levels. Because of the wide range of jobs using language skills, DOD also has a wide range of different proficiency level requirements. Over 60 percent of DOD's positions are authorized at the FSI's

3 level--professional proficiency--in either listening, reading, or speaking areas. DOD trained personnel in over 30 languages during fiscal year 1979.

Our review concentrated on the Defense Attache System (DAS) and the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG). These two groups, plus a few Marine Corps guards, comprised the military personnel contacted at the 12 embassies we visited.

One of the greatest problems DOD has in adequately filling LDPs is the high attrition rates within the services. The Army and Navy are experiencing about a 60-percent attrition rate after the first tour while the Air Force's rate is about 40 percent. As a result, DOD invests considerable time and money in training its personnel in foreign languages only to get a very short return before the enlistment period ends.

CONCLUSIONS

There are about 24,000 positions overseas that require knowledge of a foreign language. Civilian overseas language essential positions are often staffed by persons lacking the fully required foreign language competence. Six civilian agencies with LDPs in the United States reported that most of those positions were filled with language qualified personnel. In evaluating the success of agencies in filling LDPs, we rated each agency against its self-identified requirements.

Eight civilian agencies account for most of the over 3,000 civilian LDPs overseas. These agencies are State, AID, ICA, Peace Corps, the DEA, the Internal Revenue Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Foreign Agricultural Service. About 30 percent of these agencies' filled overseas LDPs are staffed by personnel not having the required language proficiency.

The Department of Defense has about 10,800 language essential positions filled by military and civilian employees located in the United States and overseas. Of the occupied positions, about 32 percent are staffed by personnel not having the required language proficiency.

Six civilian agencies account for most of the approximately 6,200 language essential positions filled in the United States. Four reported 93 percent or higher compliance. These agencies are the Voice of America, INS, GSA and the Foreign Service Institute. The FBI reported 75 percent compliance. The Library of Congress was unable to report the number of positions inadequately filled.

An agency's LDP compliance rate is a useful measure of an agency's success in meeting its language needs as it defines them. But, because agencies use different approaches for identifying language essential positions and defining their skill requirements, these LDP statistics are not comparable. For example, some agencies authorize LDPs from the S-1 to the S-5/R-5 proficiency levels, while others do not formally identify LDPs at all. If an agency told us it had an S-1 LDP filled by an employee with S-1 proficiency we credited that agency with adequately filling its needs. If, however, an agency told us it had an S-5/R-5 LDP filled by an employee with S-4+/R-4+ proficiency, we counted that position as not in compliance, despite the fact that the S-4+/R-4+ level represents a much higher absolute proficiency than the S-1 level.

In evaluating LDP statistics, it is important to note that they do not reflect the total language capability of an agency or post because they (1) do not account for LDP incumbents who do not meet the full language requirements of their jobs, but do have some knowledge of the required language; (2) do not include personnel in non-LDPs who know the local languages; and (3) include some LDP incumbents' outdated test scores which may not accurately state their current ability.

Even though greater language expertise than indicated by LDP statistics often exists at posts, in some cases it is not sufficient. Inadequate language skills may force officers to limit their contacts with host country nationals or to rely on an interpreter to conduct business. Some officers whom we interviewed said they felt frustrated and ineffective because they lacked the required language ability. They realized they were missing opportunities for working more closely with host country nationals and recognized the potential for distortion and intimidation when working through interpreters.

Civilians in language essential positions in the United States do not face these same problems. Many are hired with the language skills required by their jobs. Some of these jobs require native speaking ability, while others require a much lower proficiency, satisfied by a brief training course. The Department of Defense must deal with high attrition rates which complicate its efforts to adequately fill its LDPs.

CHAPTER 3

PERSONNEL POLICIES SHOULD FULLY RECOGNIZE LANGUAGE NEEDS AND SKILLS

Agencies have not adequately filled their language designated positions. Officials cite the pressure to quickly fill vacancies, in part because of such events as medical emergencies, retirements, and changing conditions in the host country, as the major reason for this inadequacy. These are legitimate problems over which they have little control given the limitations of money and positions. However, many personnel policies over which the agencies do have some control are also contributing factors.

--Personnel are rotated among posts every 2 to 4 years.

--Language waivers are frequently issued, allowing an officer to report to post without appropriate language training.

--In some job categories language proficiencies have little effect on career advancement beyond junior officer levels.

--Numerous disincentives to studying hard languages exist.

--Monetary incentives to study and use incentive languages have been used sparingly.

In addition, the process of designating positions at the State Department has created some misunderstandings concerning position requirements at posts and for potential LDP incumbents, creating additional problems in assignments and training.

ROTATION POLICIES RESULT IN MANY PEOPLE OVERSEAS WITHOUT NECESSARY LANGUAGE SKILLS

Agencies' assignment policies require that employees rotate among posts overseas every 2 to 4 years. The practices of rotating assignments and minimizing post vacancies increase the difficulty of filling LDPs with qualified personnel.

Assigning personnel is usually a highly complex procedure involving numerous factors; language proficiency is but one. Many factors limit assignment options, including

grade level and availability of an individual for assignment. Also, as we noted in our prior reports, language capability is often viewed as a secondary requirement, and primary job skills, such as experience in particular fields, are emphasized. In addition, some agencies--such as State, AID, and ICA--encourage their employees to serve in more than one geographical area to broaden their perspectives and experiences. This kind of policy, while having its own merits, does not permit full utilization of personnel who already have a particular foreign language proficiency.

DEA, however, only assigns volunteers or ones who apply for an announced vacancy to an LDP. Thus, re-use of language skills only occurs if someone reapplies for another vacancy. FAS, on the other hand, has a very small attache pool and re-uses personnel whenever possible in all languages.

State, ICA, and AID

The law requires each of State's, ICA's, and AID's LDPs to be filled with an employee meeting the language requirements. Assignment policies are clear. When individuals assigned to positions requiring language proficiency do not have the required language skills, they are supposed to receive language instruction before assuming duties at post. In practice, some personnel report to post without the required language skills, often because they are needed there before training is completed or even begun.

Since our last report, State, AID and ICA have improved their assignment policies to provide increased lead time for assigning officers. As provided by law, each agency has developed a system of exceptions which allows someone without the necessary qualifications to occupy an LDP. At State and ICA, any officer not meeting the language requirements of the position must be exempted from them if appropriate training is not scheduled. Waivers must explain the emergency conditions necessitating their issuance. AID requires language waivers for all underqualified officers even if they have completed the prescribed amount of training.

ICA had more specific criteria for approving waivers than the other two agencies, but rarely used its own system. During the 4-month period of June-September 1979, only one waiver was issued and this one did not address emergency conditions. At 12 of the posts visited, ICA had not filled 21 of the 60 LDPs with language-qualified officers, yet only two waivers had been issued.

At the State Department a major reason cited for each of the waivers issued from June through September was that the need to minimize post vacancies created by an incumbent's leaving left inadequate time for language training. The Department had 45 LDP incumbents lacking the required language proficiency at the 12 overseas posts we visited in late 1979.

AID's waivers were often issued (1) when an employee could not extend training beyond the prescribed amount long enough to attain the required proficiency (State and ICA do not issue waivers in these cases) and (2) to fill immediate-need post vacancies. AID missions were located at 7 of the 12 posts we visited. At the seven missions, 18 persons with less than the required language proficiency filled LDPs, but only 6 waivers had been issued.

At each of the three agencies waivers usually did not explain why a post vancancy represented an emergency. Waivers generally did not weigh the long-term disadvantages of assigning the underqualified officer against the shorter term benefits. Finally, waivers seldom indicate what other options--such as assigning another officer or sending a temporary replacement--have been explored.

Waivers issued to allow an underqualified officer to report to post reflect the posts' practical solution to the problem of needed staff. However, the waiver system does not resolve language proficiency problems. The degree of non-LDP compliance, the lack of documented "emergency conditions" in waivers and the built-in pressure from the post to fill vacancies prevent the waiver system from being an effective management tool.

DOD

Within the DOD Defense Attache System (DAS), individuals are selected for assignments from the various military services based on assignment requirements. DAS currently has 66 posts requiring a language proficiency other than English.

DAS appears to identify personnel for overseas assignments early enough to provide training. We reviewed 46 cases of current attaches in the 12 countries we visited and found the following:

Requirement level	Number of positions	Language qualified
S-2/R-2	2	2
S-2/R-3	5	4
S-3/R-2	7	6
S-3/R-3	32	27
	46	39

DAS does not have a formal waiver system, and only a few comments were noted in the personnel files concerning reasons for no training, or limited training.

FAS

The Department of Agriculture's FAS has not been totally successful in filling language essential positions. Program officials said that FAS tries to select a person to fill an LDP 12 months in advance. However, selection usually occurs 9 to 10 months before the assignment. These delays lessen the actual time available for language training. Training officials stated that a continuing problem in language training is the reluctance of operational managers to release persons for long-term (20 weeks) training. Another situation which could account for FAS not filling 64 percent of its occupied positions at the required proficiency level is the direct transfer of persons from one overseas post to another.

According to FAS officials, the re-use of language capabilities is often planned at the time of the first assignment. For example, FAS will assign an individual as an assistant attache in a post requiring a hard language. At a later time, the person will be reassigned as the agricultural attache to a post using the same hard language.

LANGUAGE SKILL NOT ADEQUATELY RECOGNIZED IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Language skills in some career functions do not appear to have a significant impact on the career development of those assigned to certain overseas jobs and, in fact, some disincentives to learn hard languages exist. Incentive programs, like those recently expanded at State, should help overcome some of these obstacles.

State, ICA and AID

State, ICA and AID recognize the utility of foreign language skills. Newly appointed State and ICA officer candidates are on language probation and may receive only one promotion and at State may not be tenured until they achieve a specified level of proficiency in at least one language. The level depends on the language's difficulty and the complexity of the writing system. Entry level AID officers are required to attain a minimum S-2 level of language proficiency during their 2-year intern program. Interns may be terminated if they are unable to reach that level, and like State and ICA employees, they also are limited to one promotion before they acquire the required proficiency.

State and ICA also have a goal that each officer, before reaching the senior level, be able to use two foreign languages at the S-3/R-3 level. This goal, however, is not used as a basis for restricting promotions to the senior level. AID has no similar policy.

In State and ICA, language skills, beyond the initial requirement, are recognized in promotion precepts. However, one study performed by a State Department official concluded that language proficiencies--hard, world, or any combination--are not predictors for promotion rates for Foreign Service officers. Both State and ICA officials said this may be true for officers who perform administrative functions, but not for officers with reporting and analysis responsibilities or whose job requires significant contact with the local population.

Some officers feel that the 1 or 2 years spent in long-term training for hard languages could actually hurt one's career progression, i.e., time is spent away from the operational environment. Although this fear may not appear to be justified, it sometimes deters individuals from volunteering for training.

Furthermore, if an employee has developed language expertise, he or she is expected to spend a good portion of service in that language area. This may discourage some people from seeking training in hard languages because many are used in few geographic areas, sometimes in no more than one country. This in turn might provide officers with few positions to which they can aspire later in their careers. Often, too, these language areas are hardship posts with difficult living conditions. Taken together, the perceived career limitations and potentially frequent assignments to

hardship posts work to deter some officers from volunteering for hard language training.

Other agencies

DAS officers are drawn from the military services for duty at U.S. embassies overseas. Their assignment, including training, usually lasts up to 5 years. Program managers do not feel that DAS experience hurts the promotion potential of officers. We were told, however, that officers sometimes view DAS as a negative career factor, but, as in State, program managers say no evidence supports such a view.

At DEA, officials said there is little career enhancement in connection with overseas assignments. High visibility during an assignment may help at promotion time. Some agents, according to DEA officials, feel the assignments can be negative. Program managers added that no one in DEA's current upper management has served overseas.

Incentives programs

Several agencies recognize that some disincentives exist for an officer to volunteer for hard language training. The growing need for proficiency in these languages caused State, ICA and AID to develop monetary incentive programs which encourage employees to develop and/or maintain language skills. We believe the use of incentives is a useful step toward improving language competence but needs to be expanded if it is to make a difference in competency rates.

Until very recently, the Uniform State/ICA policy on monetary incentives was restricted to junior officers for study and proficiency of a small group of particularly needed hard languages. In 1979, this group included about 15 languages. Until recently these incentives included:

--Salary increases for junior officers, following successful completion of 16 weeks of intensive training.

--Additional salary increases for junior officers, upon achieving a rating of S-3/R-3 or simply S-3 in a language position not requiring a reading skill.

In fiscal year 1979, the following numbers of employees received monetary incentives.

16 weeks of intensive study

	State	ICA
Arabic	23	4
Bengali	1	0
Korean	1	1
Thai	3	1
Turkish	2	1
	30	7

Achievement of S-3/R-3

	State	ICA
Bengali	2	-
Korean	1	-
Thai	1	-
	4	-

The State Department recently expanded its incentive program to include:

--Expansion of salary increases beyond junior officer levels (FSO 6, 7, 8) through mid-level ranks (FSO 3, 4, 5) for the study and achievement of S-3/R-3 proficiency in selected languages.

--10 percent salary bonus for the above personnel with an S-3/R-3 proficiency and an additional 5 percent for the S-4/R-4 level, serving in an LDP at an incentive language post.

--10 percent salary bonus for language qualified personnel at the S-3/R-3 level and an additional 5 percent at the S-4/R-4 level, who return for second or third tours in countries with a language incentive whether or not those people occupy an LDP.

After evaluating how these provisions will affect its budget, ICA will consider implementing them.

We believe these expanded provisions are an excellent step. For the first time, language competence outside of an LDP will be recognized and re-use of language skills already developed will be rewarded. State has requested funds to expand the program in fiscal year 1981 to include all hard languages.

AID also has incentive programs, with somewhat different provisions. AID Foreign Service employees, whether

they are in an LDP or not, are eligible for language incentive pay increases for proficiency in all languages except French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, provided that the language is spoken in the country to which they are assigned.

AID employees with an FSI rating of S-1 are eligible for one within-grade step increase. Those with an S-2 or better rating are entitled to two within-grade step increases, with the provision that no more than two step increases will be given for any language regardless of the tested level of proficiency.

Personnel studying the AID incentive languages are also eligible for incentive pay increases. At the end of 16 weeks of intensive language training employees receive an increase regardless of tested proficiency. Additional increases are granted when they reach the S-2 level.

In fiscal year 1979, the following number of AID personnel received incentive within-grade step increases:

16 weeks of intensive study

Indonesian	3

Achievement of S-1		Achievement of S-2	
Bengali	1	Amharic	1
Persian (Afghan)	1	Akan/Twi a/	2
Eastern Arabic	3	Persian (Afghan)	1
Indonesian	4	Bengali	1
Nepali	1	Eastern Arabic	4
Swahili	1	Indonesian	13
Thai	1	Nepali	2
Urdu	1	Haitian Creole	2
		Thai	3
	13	Urdu	2
			31

a/A local language in Central Africa.

FAS grants incentive awards on an annual basis to eligible employees who attain or maintain targeted levels of foreign language proficiency in languages used by FAS either overseas or in Washington. Employees need not be in language positions but must be eligible for overseas assignments. The FAS program was begun in 1975 when 20 awards amounting to $8,250 were given. By 1978, the program had grown to

47 awards totaling $17,600. An employee can receive awards for up to 2 languages--3 if the third language is Chinese or Japanese. FAS's program contrasts with State's in that FAS awards specific amounts ranging from $100 to $500.

STATE'S DESIGNATION PROCESS

The Department has established a system for identifying language essential positions. However, State's procedures for designating LDPs have resulted in some misunderstanding at posts concerning which positions are properly classified language essential. The Department's most recent official worldwide LDP review was in January 1978 during which the overseas posts reported positions in which language competence was considered essential. State reviewed those positions but did not officially inform the overseas posts of the results of the review. In one country we visited, this resulted in some confusion. Post officials there had three sets of LDP records. Discrepancies existed in 9 of the 17 positions--four discrepancies in the classification of a position as an LDP, and five in the proficiency level required.

State has neither a requirement for periodic worldwide reviews, nor formalized procedures for changing language designations between such assessments. The Department, however, has reviewed LDPs about every 2 years. A number of posts have recommended changes since the January 1978 review. Although State may not have responded formally to these requests, officials said the posts' recommended changes are treated as LDPs for training and assignment purposes--even though the official record would show no change in position needs.

This informal designation process has created confusion at some posts over which positions are actually LDPs. We did not identify any immediate deficiency resulting from the Department's records, although we believe, and some post officials agree, that records containing out-of-date information could affect the assignment and training of future LDP incumbents. For example, if an LDP and the appropriate skill level are not accurately reflected on State records, State cannot ensure that language capabilities are appropriately considered in making assignments and that the appropriate time is allowed for training. State Department officials in Washington acknowledged the discrepancies in various sets of records but denied such errors could cause problems in the assignment and training

process. They explained that assignments are made in Washington and post data is irrelevant. They also said that the people making the assignments have the correct data.

During our review, State officials informed each post of its informal designation process and assured them that, despite the fact that their interim recommendations have not been confirmed, State is making every effort to comply with their requests and provide language training to officers assigned to recommended LDPs. State officials have said they would respond to each request received since January 1978 and are also considering revising their designation procedures to allow for prompt updating.

CONCLUSIONS

Agencies have not adequately filled their LDPs. Officials cite the need to quickly fill vacancies as a major cause. We recognize the pressure to assign Foreign Service officers, especially in smaller posts with limited local national staff and only a few Americans. However, other personnel policies are contributing factors.

State, AID and ICA rotate their officers every 2 to 4 years. In so doing, they sometimes grant waivers exempting replacements from language requirements. Waivers often fail to document emergencies which justified their issuance, and do not weigh the long-term disadvantages of assigning underqualified officers against the short-term benefits of filling positions sooner. We believe that officials at agency headquarters should take an even more stringent approach in requiring an explanation of emergency conditions when approving waivers. One way to ensure that waivers are held to a minimum at any one post, would be to limit waivers for any agency at any post. For example, agencies might establish a 5 percent "no competence" and 10 percent "partial competence" limit at any post.

We also believe that agency senior management should be periodically told how many, and why, waivers were issued; what the emergency conditions were that necessitated issuing them; and whether other options were considered. Specific reoccurring causes could then be identified and agency action taken if necessary. Of the three agencies, only ICA's regulations contain such a requirement.

Language skills are not adequately recognized in career development policies. Beyond an initial requirement which keeps officers on probation until one language is learned, skills have little effect in promotion decisions

in some job categories. Furthermore, perceived career limitations from spending time in long-term training, and potentially frequent assignments to undesirable posts, deter some officers from volunteering for hard language training. Monetary incentive programs are useful in encouraging volunteers for this training. AID already has such a policy for monetary incentives and State has expanded its policy. The relative weight of language competence and improvements should be increased in the precepts for promotion boards both to provide incentives and more meaningful rewards at all levels.

Finally, State's process for designating LDPs results in situations which can adversely affect both assignments and training. State should formalize its process for changing LDPs and provide posts with adequate feedback when the changes occur.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the Secretary of State, Director of ICA, and Administrator of AID:

--Ensure that language waivers, allowing non-language qualified officers to occupy LDPs, are issued only under genuine emergency conditions. Waivers should weigh the long-term disadvantages against the short-term benefits of assigning a less-than-qualified officer. Waivers should be required whenever an officer does not meet the language requirement, no matter how much training is provided, as AID currently does.

--Require an annual report on the reasons why waivers were issued and the emergency conditions that required waivers.

--Give greater emphasis to language proficiencies in promotion decisions.

--Require LDP designation procedures be reviewed to allow for timely updating, feedback to posts on their recommendations, and expeditious recording of changes on all official documents.

CHAPTER 4

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS NEED IMPROVEMENTS

Government foreign language training programs do not always provide personnel with the language proficiency required to do their jobs. At the end of the standard course of language training many students do not have the level of language competence necessary to do their jobs and what they have learned is often not specifically related to the requirements of their job. In addition, many people occupying LDPs who lack the language qualifications are not enrolled in language classes at overseas posts. Furthermore, these classes are not meeting the needs of all of those who are.

The Foreign Service Institute's School of Language Studies trains most civilian Federal employees assigned to LDPs overseas, and trained over 2,000 employees and dependents in 1979. About half of them were from agencies other than the State Department. This chapter is primarily concerned with the language training provided by FSI. However, we do discuss the need for more effective training provided by the Peace Corps.

The Department of Defense, through DLI, conducts the largest and most varied language program in the Federal Government which involves over 100,000 people annually. DLI trains people to speak and understand foreign languages to meet the needs of military duties. Most of the specific job requirements for intensive language training are the fields of military intelligence and communications and the Defense attache program (80 percent) and the various military missions and advisory groups (20 percent). We did not review the training provided the intelligence community by the Defense Language Institute, nor the training conducted by the military commands.

MANY FSI STUDENTS DO NOT MEET THE REQUIRED PROFICIENCY LEVEL BY THE END OF TRAINING

A 1976 FSI report noted that (1) only 52 percent of the Foreign Service officers--regardless of aptitude, starting level, or length of training--reached S-3/R-3 or better by the end of Washington training, and (2) an additional 22 percent reached the 2+ level. This shows that, in many cases, officers assigned to LDPs did not meet the language requirements when they arrived at a post, despite having had the full term of language training. This situation still exists and pertains to students from other agencies as well.

The current length of training is intended to provide a student with a good language aptitude a reasonable chance of achieving S-3/R-3 in the world languages and S-2/R-2 in the hard languages. It is limited by cost and the time available to students.

To produce a higher percentage of graduates with the level of competence required by their positions, the Department considered adding 4 weeks to the "standard" 20-week courses but, because of the additional costs, decided not to automatically extend the courses. State alternatively allowed selected students to receive extended language training. However, this option has not solved the problem.

Posts depend on the arrival of an employee, at a particular time, who may have already made irreversible plans for moving before the decision was made that he or she remain in training. Consequently, agencies continue to fill LDPs with people who do not have the required level of proficiency.

We believe that extending some classes by 4 weeks on an experimental basis would likely produce a higher percentage of graduates with the level of competence required by their positions. We agree with FSI that this may be long enough for students only one-half a point below their goal at the end of the standard courses to reach that goal. AID, however, said 8 weeks are required for AID personnel to move from the S-2+ to the S-3 level.

SOME FSI COURSES DO NOT FULLY PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SPECIFIC JOBS

Some FSI graduates are not fully prepared to use their language skills on the job when they first arrive at a post. This results, in part, from the fact that not all language courses are tailored to the needs of specific jobs and, therefore, fail to prepare students for the situations they commonly encounter on the job. It can also be attributed to the fact that many students have only used the language in classroom situations and need further experience in dealing with native speakers. The post language programs are intended to provide followup to full-time Washington training. But, later in this chapter we point out that many officers do not have the time to attend post classes and, even for those who do, the 1 hour a day, 5 days a week schedule may be insufficient to give them the help they need.

FSI management recognized this problem and is trying to make language training more relevant to the jobs students perform at posts. For example, FSI already offers special programs for consular officers in Spanish and Arabic. An

FSI official has proposed that the Institute identify the specific job-related elements such as vocabulary needs of officers concerned with political, economic, consular, administrative, and cultural affairs as well as military, labor, and agricultural matters. He has also suggested that FSI identify the types of situations in which these categories of officers are most likely to use the language and incorporate simulations of these into the language classes. FSI officials are working to accomplish those suggestions.

The Dean of FSI's School of Language Studies and other officials also support full-time language training in the country to which an officer is assigned as another way of preparing personnel to fully use their language skills. Such training would follow full-time language training in Washington, not replace it. Generally, this type of training is costly and time consuming so FSI will consider requests on an individual basis. In addition to the FSI overseas field schools, FSI also pays for some language students to attend 1- to 2-month programs at foreign universities and institutes. For example, FSI plans to send 12 to 15 students to in-country training in hard languages in fiscal year 1980. AID has also sent a number of employees to full-time language training programs in Guatemala and Indonesia following training at FSI.

Some positions may actually require a higher level of proficiency than S-3/R-3 (see ch. 5). If FSI becomes responsible for training personnel beyond the S-3/R-3 level, longer classes in Washington and more full-time in-country language training will be required. FSI officials said they could not train individuals to the S-4/R-4 level in a Washington classroom, because that level requires a broad range of experiences achieved only by living in the country.

LANGUAGE SKILLS MAINTENANCE

Although State/ICA regulations say the employee is responsible for maintaining foreign language competence, these agencies, along with AID, FAS, DOD and Peace Corps do provide refresher training for employees with less-than-needed proficiency. All of these agencies normally pay for such training only when it is required for a current or upcoming assignment. We did not determine the conditions under which other agencies provide such training.

The justification for all State/ICA language training is job-related need and agency policy only provides for retraining when it is needed for a specific assignment.

FSI helps personnel refresh their language ability by sending language training material and tapes to overseas posts for employees to use informally on their own. Self-study materials are normally issued when an employee has a definite upcoming assignment to a country where the language is spoken.

The practice of training personnel only after they have been identified for an assignment clearly represents a judicious use of training resources in the short-run. Some persons during the course of our review offered the observation that programs to maintain foreign language skills of those employees who do not presently have a need for them may be useful. Such programs would include periodic retesting of skill levels when employees are in Washington, D.C., and programs to maintain or upgrade skills to a desired level.

Of course, it is difficult to justify the expense of these kinds of programs in view of more immediate needs. The counter argument suggests that the maintenance programs would, in the long-run, be more economical than retraining programs.

Many officers in Washington take advantage of FSI Early Morning Language Classes to upgrade their language skills. These classes are offered 1 hour a day, 5 days a week for 17 weeks in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Personnel with an immediate job-related need for the language are given priority in these classes. AID also offers classes in French and Spanish in Washington. These classes are taught by commercial instructors twice each week from noon to 2:00 p.m.

The largest program for upgrading language skills is the post language program which is intended to serve the needs of those stationed in a country where the language is spoken.

POSTS' LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Language programs at overseas posts are not being fully used to upgrade language skills. Many people who should be enrolled in post language classes are not. Also, there is usually (1) a lack of emphasis on language training by post officials, (2) insufficient information on staff proficiency available at posts, and (3) inadequate supervision and guidance from FSI in Washington.

Underqualified LDP incumbents are not enrolled in the post language program

State, ICA, and AID regulations require underqualified LDP incumbents to enroll in post language programs. State and ICA direct underqualified LDP incumbents to take the most intensive language training consistent with the requirements of their jobs, until they reach the position-designated proficiency. AID requires LDP incumbents without the specified proficiency to be enrolled in a post's program, unless the mission director determines that additional training would not be effective. Foreign Agricultural Service regulations direct employees serving at posts requiring language proficiency to enroll in a part-time, tutorial program until they meet the specified proficiency.

DAS encourages employees to enroll in post language programs when they arrive in a country without the required proficiency. Marine Corps guards, although they have no language requirement, are also encouraged to attend the post programs.

Agencies continue to assign personnel who lack the required language skills to LDPs. And yet, at 8 of the posts visited, 32 of the 68 (47 percent) underqualified incumbents of language-designated positions were not attending the posts' language training classes. Some individuals said they did not have enough time to attend classes, traveled frequently and lacked interest in learning the language, or felt their current proficiency was adequate, even though it was less than required.

Post officials do not encourage officers to attend language classes due to insufficient information on officers' language abilities

Supervisory personnel of various agencies overseas seldom encourage LDP incumbents to enroll in post language training programs. Training at the posts we visited was voluntary, and only those underqualified LDP incumbents who sought training were enrolled. Officials believed the training would not be effective unless the individual was motivated to learn. In addition, post officials often are not aware that an LDP incumbent has a low proficiency level, because FSI language test scores are not always available at a post.

In response to our 1976 report, which commented on this problem, the Department of State said:

"The Department agrees that providing overseas posts with proficiency scores of personnel proceeding to overseas assignments would greatly assist post officials in identifying language training needs. FSI will work out a system to notify posts of the final proficiency ratings of employees completing Washington training."

According to FSI officials, the Institute did develop a system for routinely notifying posts of State and ICA employees' end-of-training proficiency scores. However, posts may still not have an accurate picture of their officers' language proficiency for several reasons.

--The system only accounts for officers who have gone through FSI training and not those who received training at commercial facilities or had some previously acquired knowledge of the language. ICA does notify posts of an officer's language proficiency in these latter instances when a person is assigned. State does not.

--FSI only notifies posts of an officer's language proficiency at the end of training if State or ICA have indicated on the request-for-training form that the officer is assigned to an LDP. However, the form has no block for indicating if the position is an LDP and agencies occasionally fail to identify positions as such.

--When posts receive end-of-training proficiency reports, they may not maintain the information.

AID has developed a system for notifying AID missions of underqualified officers' language test scores at the end of training. The agency is required to issue waivers if an officer does not meet the requirements for an LDP. These waivers exempt the officer from meeting a required level of proficiency and explain why the level could not initially be met. In addition, AID provides posts with monthly staffing patterns which indicate LDP positions, the incumbents, and the incumbents' most recent test scores. AID also routinely informs missions of employees' test scores and the language requirements for each waiver case.

Such information, if provided routinely on all post positions would give the principal officer at the post an overview of the post's language skills, provide a basis for planning the post's language program, and identify officers who should be attending. State has a similar computer printout listing LDP incumbents and their test

scores by post; however, currently the information is not routinely sent to the posts.

Post language programs are difficult to implement

Poor management of the language programs at several posts we visited resulted in funding problems and the inability to meet the needs of underqualified LDP incumbents. For example, insufficient funds and poor use of available funds have resulted in

--canceling some classes in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year because funds ran out;

--failing to provide the most effective training for underqualified LDP incumbents, including individual tutoring when appropriate;

--failing to provide training to all employees and dependents who would like to take it; and

--using unsatisfactory instructional material at some posts.

The post language officer, with assistance from the FSI regional language supervisor, is responsible for administering posts' language programs locally. The post language officer is also assisted by a pool of FSI linguists and senior instructors who are stationed in Washington and serve part-time in this capacity. They visit posts where they advise and assist principal officers and chief representatives of other participating agencies on all aspects of post language programs as well as administer language proficiency tests. They also help select and train local instructors and recommend suitable training materials, and other ways to improve the quality of instruction.

The post language officer also is responsible for formulating and implementing a single, fully coordinated language training program to meet the needs of all participating agencies. However, this officer has no control over other agencies' actions and is dependent on them providing information concerning their language needs. We visited several posts where the post language system was not working and some agencies had started their own language program.

In Indonesia, Korea, and Japan, agencies provided their own language training, in addition to the posts' language programs. In Indonesia, the Defense Liaison Group, AID, and FAS provided language training, because officials said the post's language programs could not meet the needs of all

agencies. Post language officers and the regional language supervisor said they did not monitor training provided by other agencies.

Need for guidance from FSI

FSI's responsibility for developing and supervising posts' language training programs includes (1) allocating money for instructors, (2) furnishing training materials and equipment, (3) providing guidance through correspondence or visits by supervising linguists, and (4) reviewing the practices of each program to ensure that funds are being spent judiciously.

In 1976, we noted several problems concerning the management of post language programs. We then recommended that the Secretary of State direct the Foreign Service Institute to devote more time to evaluating the management of post programs, particularly during visits to posts.

At that time, the Department of State responded:

"The Department has been increasingly aware of these shortcomings, all of them stemming from one basic problem: lack of adequate supervision to programs in the field ***.

"The Department recognizes the necessity of stationing Regional Language Supervisors (RLS) at strategic locations in the field to provide professional language training and testing assistance to posts."

In the past, FSI had assigned part-time regional language supervisor responsibilities to the directors of the field language schools. In 1979 the Institute established a Washington-based pool of about 30 supervisory linguists and senior instructors who are to make one or two trips a year as regional language supervisors. The directors of the field schools also visit some posts annually. FSI has identified about 100 "major" posts--of a total 185 posts with language training programs--and hopes to ensure that each is visited once a year. In the last 9 months of fiscal year 1979, FSI employees visited about 60 posts in the role of regional language supervisor.

Although support by part-time regional language supervisors is helpful, we believe that more frequent and longer visits from FSI will be necessary.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN PEACE CORPS LANGUAGE TRAINING

Standards of proficiency should be raised in the Peace Corps language training programs for volunteers, and staff standards should be established. Also, training programs should be improved.

The Peace Corps staff are Federal employees who may serve up to 5 years. Volunteers are not salaried employees of the U.S. Government and usually serve for only 2 years. Before being sworn in as volunteers, they are in pre-service training status and called trainees.

The Peace Corps Act, as amended, states that volunteers must possess the language proficiency required to do their jobs. This act does not address the issue of language proficiency for staff, nor does it require the Peace Corps to designate language essential positions.

In 1979, the Peace Corps had 72 staff positions overseas which required language proficiency.

Current training for volunteers and staff

Pre-service, in-country training for Peace Corps trainees usually lasts about 14 weeks and includes at least 250 hours of intensive foreign language instruction. However, trainees' language learning experience is much more intense than this period of formal language training would indicate. Trainees receive training in the local language in technical skills and cross-cultural relations. Moreover, many Peace Corps trainees usually live with a local family, which means they use the local language even when not in the classroom. Volunteers usually receive an additional 1-to-2 weeks of in-service training during their first year.

The Peace Corps approach to language training for volunteers is unique in the Federal Government. Except for a few positions requiring French or Spanish and those in English-speaking countries, it is assumed that all volunteers need language training although there are no overall Peace Corps standards for volunteers. The emphasis is on quickly providing volunteers with "survival skills" in the local language (usually defined as S-1+ by the end of preservice training), so they can begin work immediately. The Peace Corps assumes that volunteers will increase their proficiency rapidly during the first year because they will be using the language constantly. Despite this concentrated training, many volunteers feel their language proficiency is lower than needed to carry out their jobs.

Peace Corps staff members are employed usually to serve up to 5 years in a particular country. They usually have the required language skill as a condition of employment. The Peace Corps, however, does provide some language training for staff and dependents through commercial facilities. In fiscal year 1979, 22 Peace Corps staff employees received training at a cost of $3,693.

Higher standards needed for volunteers

In a 1978 survey about one quarter of the volunteers responding said they used their host country language at least half of the time at work and evaluated their proficiency as S-1 or below. Since the S-1 level was defined in the survey as "able to converse in a social situation in a very limited way, no proficiency in technical language for job," better language training seems in order. This thought was supported by the respondents, only 60 percent of whom rated their language training positively. Other volunteers may not have the ability to do their jobs adequately.

The Peace Corps has no agency-wide language proficiency standards for volunteers. Currently, many country posts have set an informal goal of S-1+ for the end of preservice training. Since this level may not provide a sufficient basis for continued language learning on the job, the Peace Corps should determine what level of language skill is required, set specific goals, and train accordingly.

Higher standards needed for staff

The Peace Corps prefers all staff personnel to speak the local language at the S-3 level; however, this is not a formal requirement. Language proficiency requirements for staff vary among the three Peace Corps regional offices.

One quarter of the American staff in the North African, Near East, Asia and Pacific Region who responded to a 1978 survey said they used interpreters when dealing with host country officials. In addition, about one-third of all American staff respondents said they needed additional language training. Peace Corps employees whom we contacted in Washington, D.C. (some of whom are former volunteers), also expressed concern over the inadequate language capabilities of staff in some regions.

We recognize that, in spite of the lack of Peace Corps-wide language standards, many staff do have a working knowledge of the local language largely because many are former volunteers. However, in light of some staff members' reliance on interpreters and their expressed need for language

training, the Peace Corps should set standards for staff language ability and train people accordingly.

Training programs should be improved

Volunteers' dissatisfaction with preservice language training and their low self-rated ability to use the language on the job indicates the need for better language training. Peace Corps officials agreed that it is time to redesign Peace Corps language courses, many of which were developed almost 20 years ago when the Peace Corps was established.

There is no central point within Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., that monitors language training programs--language training is decentralized. Peace Corps staff in each country develop their own courses. Pre-service and in-service training programs differ among countries. Some are conducted by local nationals who are full-time Peace Corps employees; others are conducted by local universities or institutions under contract with the Peace Corps. The length of training, methodology, and types of instructional materials also differ.

Peace Corps officials felt that country language training programs would benefit by having a central point within Washington headquarters that could serve as a source of expertise and provide them assistance in redesigning language courses, identifying useful language materials, and training country language training coordinators. In addition, two Peace Corps staff members suggested establishing more overseas regional training officer positions.

Although the Peace Corps has three regional offices, only one currently has a regional training officer. (He is stationed in Senegal and services West Africa.) This officer arranges workshops and training conferences for country language training coordinators (many of whom are foreign nationals) and helps them develop materials and work with resources.

CONCLUSIONS

FSI foreign language training programs do not always provide personnel with the language proficiency required to do their jobs. At the end of language training many students

do not have the level of language competence necessary to do their jobs and often what they have learned is not specifically related to the requirements of their jobs.

The current length of language training is insufficient to allow an adequate number of officers to graduate with an S-3/R-3 in the world languages or an S-2/R-2 in the hard languages (agencies have been unable to take full advantage of the selective extension option). Consequently, some officers are being sent to posts after the full course of language training without meeting the requirements of their jobs.

Some FSI graduates are unprepared to use their language ability on the job when they first arrive at a post because language classes are not sufficiently job-related and they have no real-life experience in using the language. Full-time language training experiences in the country to which an officer is assigned strengthens an officer's language skills and may be necessary to achieve the proficiency required by some jobs. Training to help an officer retain or refresh language skills is usually given only when the language is needed for a current or upcoming assignment.

Post language programs are generally successful in teaching elementary and courtesy level language skills but are usually not adequate to help beginners acquire the proficiencies required for LDPs. They can, however, help refresh proficiencies which have been previously attained.

Post language programs are not being fully used to upgrade language skills. Some underqualified LDP incumbents are not enrolled in post classes, and some post programs have insufficient funds and are poorly managed. Also, post officials do not usually emphasize language training, information on staff proficiencies at posts is insufficient, and supervision and guidance by FSI in Washington is inadequate. As recommended in chapter 3, we believe posts should be provided with adequate feedback on which positions are LDPs and at what level. Also, posts should be periodically notified of all incumbents' proficiency so post management officials can identify officers who should be attending classes. AID sends monthly staffing patterns containing this information to posts.

Peace Corps volunteers and staff should be given better and more language training in order to help them perform their jobs more effectively. Language proficiency standards for Peace Corps volunteers and staff should be established and people trained accordingly.

Some Peace Corps volunteers and staff lack the language competence necessary to do their work and the current level of language training is insufficient to remedy the situation. Pre-service language training for volunteers may not provide a sufficient basis for continued language learning on the job. Language training for staff is minimal and not fully meeting their needs.

Some language courses should be revised and Peace Corps headquarters in Washington should provide country language programs the expertise, guidance and assistance needed to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of State direct FSI to

--continue its efforts to make language training more relevant to the jobs students assume at post;

--encourage more intensive in-country training after the officer completes training in Washington but before the officer assumes total job responsibilities; and

--improve post language programs by increasing funding, and by increasing services and guidance to posts through more frequent regional language supervisor visits.

We recommend that the Secretary of State, Director of ICA, and Administrator of AID

--direct post officials to ensure that underqualified incumbents of LDPs are encouraged to attend post language classes and are given sufficient time to do so.

We recommend that the Director of ACTION

--establish language proficiency standards for Peace Corps volunteers and staff;

--increase language training for both staff and volunteers;

--improve language training programs for volunteers and establish a central point within Peace Corps

headquarters in Washington to provide expertise, guidance and assistance to all country programs; and

--consider establishing additional regional training officer positions overseas.

CHAPTER 5

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS ARE UNDERSTATED

Language requirements at posts overseas are understated. At some locations more positions should be language designated and levels of proficiency should be higher. Only 4 civilian agencies and DOD have a formal system for designating those positions requiring language skills. But these systems are not fully adequate. Furthermore, post and headquarters officials tend to compromise the designation of LDPs by considering factors other than job needs and place arbitrary restrictions on those designated. For example, the State Department does not include any secretarial positions at all, or any officer designations above an S-3/R-3, no matter what the job requirements are.

Many other agencies have no formal system for identifying language requirements. Understated requirements can reduce the resources devoted to language training and preclude an officer, already qualified in a language, from receiving appropriate consideration for a position. Understated requirements also fail to provide a valid benchmark for measuring LDP compliance and progress in meeting language requirements.

INEFFECTIVE SYSTEMS FOR DESIGNATING LANGUAGE POSITIONS

The four civilian agencies having formal systems for identifying language requirements are State, the International Communication Agency, the Agency for International Development, and the Foreign Agricultural Service. The Department of Defense also has a system for identifying foreign language requirements.

However, we found many cases where non-LDP incumbents or their supervisors thought language skills were essential to that position. For example:

--A vice consular officer occupying a non-LDP said he had an S-2/R-2 proficiency but needed an S-3/R-3 to adequately do his job. Some duties, including processing special cases, such as the death or arrest of an American citizen, required the use of the host country language. Such instances require contact with mostly non-English speaking people such as police, hospital personnel, judges, and other local officials.

--A regional security officer, who is in a non-LDP and does not know the host country language, is not able

to work efficiently when contacting foreign-speaking individuals. The position responsibilities require numerous dealings with local police, security officials, national guard, and bodyguards of the Ambassador (none of whom speak English). The officer believed that the position should be language designated at the S-2/R-2 proficiency level. Post officials, however, have never requested that the position be an LDP.

--A consular officer who occupies a non-LDP said his lack of foreign language proficiency disrupts and slows the processing of passports through his section. He currently interviews people through an interpreter four to five times a day, with the discussions lasting from 5 to 20 minutes each. Also, since many contacts do not speak English additional foreign speaking clerical staff who speak the local language have been added to ensure adequate processing. To meet the specific requirements of his position and provide more thorough oversight, the incumbent believed an S-2/R-2 level of proficiency would be very helpful.

Numerous other positions which require language have not been made LDPs, apparently due to a post's administrative oversight. For example, at one post, only three of State's five political officer positions were LDPs. Yet according to the head of the political section, language proficiency at the S-3/R-3 level or higher was absolutely essential for these positions.

Opinions differ on whether some positions should be designated language essential. Individual perceptions of the essential need for a language capability even differed between embassy employees and their supervisors. For example, one chief economic officer feels his economic analyst definitely needs the host country language capability to do the job effectively and should be designated an LDP. However,the incumbent firmly believes a good language capability would only be useful, not essential, to carry out work responsibilities. In such instances, we could not reconcile different individual perceptions as to the essential need of any language capability. We do feel that someone who actively used his/her language skills would be more likely to praise the benefits of language capability while someone without language proficiency might be indifferent to the essentiality of language in their work.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING LANGUAGE POSITIONS

State, ICA and AID have developed criteria for designating language essential positions. Each of these agencies

has used very different approaches in defining the conditions to be considered when identifying LDPs. In each case the criteria are general and the final decision about which positions should be designated language essential is still left to the judgment of the top agency official at the post.

Positions needing language proficiency are determined largely on the basis of personal recommendations by the Chief of Mission, and many officials believe that sufficient information is available to make those recommendations.

Agency officials were unable to suggest any more specific criteria which could be applied worldwide and still meet the needs of individual posts which vary tremendously in size and mission. They believed current systems and guidance were adequate and that more criteria would be too restrictive.

Uniform State/ICA regulations list two criteria for designating LDPs:

--Only those positions where language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient should be designated.

--LDPs should not be designated above the S-3/R-3 or below the S-2/R-2 level, except positions not requiring both speaking and reading proficiency may be designated for one skill only.

AID regulations require that positions be designated at either S-2 or S-3 levels and that only those positions where language proficiency is essential be so designated. In addition, each of these three agencies has developed other standards for designating LDPs.

State

In our June 1976 report 1/ we recommended that State and ICA improve their systems for designating LDPs and incorporate in their regulations designation policies and criteria. We also recommended that these agencies periodically reassess their language requirements. That year, State developed criteria derived from major job components overseas which require knowledge of a language.

1/"Improvement Needed in Language Training and Assignments for U.S. Personnel Overseas" (ID-76-19; June 16, 1976; p. 17).

In January 1978, when State conducted its most recent worldwide LDP review it provided posts with these criteria to assist them in reevaluating their requirements.

State requested that posts consider specifically whether substantial language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful, to successfully perform one or more of the following major job requirements:

--Conduct official business and develop useful working relations with host country officials and other significant embassy contacts.

--Supervise embassy local employees directly.

--Deal with the general public on a continuing basis, including conducting interviews.

--Understand significant public announcements.

--Interpret for senior mission personnel or high-level official visitors.

--Make formal or informal public appearances (radio, TV, speeches to local groups), using local language to explain U.S. policies.

--Read written materials in a local language.

--Monitor translations made by local personnel and translate documents in local language when sensitivity requires handling by U.S. personnel.

These criteria are general and the final decision about which positions should be designated language essential is still left to the judgment of post officials. However, State Department officials believed that these criteria were adequate.

Although we were unable to identify any more specific criteria for worldwide application, we believe that the current standards are open to broad interpretation. For example, we noted that many similar positions continued to have different language requirements at different posts, and the lack of specific criteria for LDPs might have contributed to this. The personnel officer position at one Latin American post required the S-3/R-3 proficiency level. The incumbent believes this level is absolutely essential for the work. Yet at two other Latin American posts, the requirement is S-2/R-2 and at a fourth, the position is not an LDP. Although a specific cause is not clear, lack of specific LDP criteria,

inconsistent application of the criteria and/or differing conditions at each post probably are all contributing factors.

ICA

ICA regulations set forth guidelines and goals for determining the number of LDPs in various categories of countries. For example, category A consists of countries where a world language is the primary language. This category includes all the Latin American countries and most Western European countries. According to the guidelines, 85 percent of the authorized officer positions in these countries should be LDPs. In category B countries, such as Hong Kong and Algeria, a hard language is the primary language and a world language co-equal. The guidelines state that, in these countries 30 percent of the officer positions should require knowledge of the primary language, while 85 percent should require the alternate, co-equal language. In category C countries, such as Russia and Saudi Arabia, where only a hard language is spoken, the guidelines say that 50 percent of the officer positions should be language designated.

Although these guidelines are in ICA's regulations, ICA does not use them in the process of designating LDPs. They were not included in the message to posts initiating ICA's more recent worldwide review of LDPs in October 1979, nor are they used in any other way.

An ICA official said these goals were artificial and invalid and that only officials at posts are able to judge what language competence is needed.

These goals are an attempt to encourage some sort of uniformity in the number of LDPs in various countries. However, we agree that they are not adequate to ensure that posts have the language competence they require. According to these goals, 85 percent of the officer positions in Latin America should be LDPs. In fact, all ICA officer positions in this area (except administrative positions) are LDPs at the S-3/R-3 level.

AID

AID regulations state that all LDPs are to be reviewed annually by the Mission Director to ensure that they conform to the established criteria which follow:

--use of English language in country of assignment,

--degree of foreign counterparts' knowledge of the English language,

--extent to which a foreign language is needed to conduct official business, representational requirements, or social contacts, and

--availability and reliability of interpreters and/or translators.

AID regulations clearly state that language requirements are not to be downgraded or ignored to avoid delays in recruitment or assignment. These criteria, like State's, are general and leave the final decision about which positions should be LDPs to the judgment of post officials.

Despite these criteria and annual reviews of LDPs, we feel that AID could improve its process for designating language essential positions. For example, we noted that AID has designated a far greater portion of LDPs in world languages than hard. In Latin America, where only Spanish, French, and Portuguese are spoken, 96 percent of all positions are LDPs. In the Near East where hard languages such as Arabic and Persian (Afghan) are used, only 19 percent of the positions are LDPs. In fact, 92 percent of all AID's LDPs are in French (51 percent), Spanish (39 percent), and Portuguese (2 percent) while the remaining 8 percent are divided among Indonesian, Thai, Eastern Arabic, Persian (Afghan), Nepali, Swahili and Urdu. This inconsistent designation has created problems. One occurred at an Arabic post, which had more than 100 U.S. employees. Only one position was an LDP. Senior officials acknowledged that the lack of language skills limited the effectiveness of their programs there. These officials said that several more LDPs between the S-3/R-3 and S-3/R-0 level were needed. However, the post had not requested any additional LDPs to overcome this apparent deficiency. According to one official, designating LDPs is a very low priority of the mission in relation to its other more immediate needs.

Foreign Agricultural Service

FAS regulations list posts with language designated positions but do not provide any criteria or require periodic reviews. All LDPs are so designated by FAS headquarters. Post personnel have no input in the decision. At some posts visited, no FAS positions were LDPs, and post officials thought the positions were properly designated. At another post, all positions were LDPs. The Attache there said only one officer needs the required proficiency and thought no criteria or review requirement were necessary.

NON-JOB RELATED FACTORS AFFECT DESIGNATING LDPs

A position's language requirement should be based exclusively on essential job needs. However, we noted cases where requirements may have been compromised by

--budgetary considerations,

--fears of creating vacancies at posts,

--prohibitions against designating positions above the S-3/R-3 level, and

--prohibitions against designating junior officer positions above S-2/R-2 in hard languages.

ICA officials said that, in reviewing posts' LDP recommendations, they consider the cost of training someone to fill the position before endorsing the recommendation. They also said that, for practical reasons, requirements for those languages which take about 2 years to learn (such as Japanese) have been downgraded from S-3/R-3 to S-3/R-2. One official said it could take 3 months to improve reading skills from a 2+ to a 3. This extra time is expensive and creates both morale problems and post vacancies.

Embassy officials felt that having an experienced but nonlanguage qualified officer was more important than waiting for someone to complete language training. For example, one Deputy Chief of Mission felt that State's Personnel Officer at the post would benefit from language proficiency at the S-2/R-2 level. This capability, according to the Deputy Chief, would greatly enhance the Personnel Officer's ability to perform effectively, because about 65 percent of this person's time is spent managing the Mission's 650 foreign national employees, many of whom speak little or no English. Using an interpreter is time consuming and frequently inhibiting, and, at times, results in misunderstandings. However, even though "direct supervision of Embassy local employees" was included as part of the criteria to be used in determining LDPs during the 1978 review, the Deputy Chief of Mission felt that the selection of candidates should not be restricted to only those familiar with the language or willing to take the time to learn it. According to the Personnel Officer, the shortage of officers with the appropriate grade level and qualifications would mean the post might have a vacancy if State required a language qualified replacement.

Other reasons for understated language requirements are the artificial limitations imposed by some agencies. For example, Uniform State/ICA regulations prohibit designations above the S-3/R-3 level. Nonetheless, we spoke with several officials abroad who believed that a language proficiency of S-3+/R-3+ or S-4/R-4 was necessary for key officers such as the Deputy Chief of Mission and Chief Political Officer. An apparent reason for the restriction in levels is the Foreign Service Institute's policy of not providing formal language training programs above the S-3/R-3 level. Also, post language officers often deny language training to officers already proficient at the S-3/R-3 level because of shortages of funds. FSI will provide guidance where feasible to help officers attain an S-4/R-4 proficiency, but believes the officer must make the effort outside formal training to add those elements which this proficiency demands.

State/ICA regulations limit junior officer language training to a maximum of 24 weeks, although ICA sometimes extends training to 44 weeks. Therefore, LDPs in most hard languages for junior officers are normally designated at the S-2/R-2 level; in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, at the S-2/R-0 level. This artificial limitation is placed because, according to State, attaining higher proficiency levels in the 6-month maximum training time is virtually impossible. While State has encouraged transferring functions that require higher proficiency to other officers, we do not believe that this is always feasible. The result then is that the low designation level for junior officers may not reflect true requirements of the positions.

SECRETARY POSITIONS USUALLY NOT DESIGNATED

Agencies are not required to designate any staff positions, including secretarial, as requiring language proficiency. Therefore, few secretarial positions are classified as LDPs, and those, only by ICA, FAS, and AID. However, many secretarial positions do require language proficiency. Many people said that secretaries in key positions require language proficiency to answer telephones, make appointments and type correspondence. A secretary at one post claimed she needed proficiency but, since she was not in an LDP, she was not given adequate training. As a result, her work has suffered. At least two posts have requested that the position of Secretary of Ambassador be made an LDP, but they have not received a response from headquarters.

The State Department has not designated any secretarial LDPs. In practice, the Department sees the need and has considered certain positions to be language designated. In such cases, the

secretarial placement officers know the incumbent must have a reasonable level of fluency to do the job and would only consider candidates who possess the language skills. However, language training in the past has been minimal and usually limited to one of the world languages.

Interest in this situation has increased, and the Department recently proposed to prepare a selected, priority list of secretarial positions for which language training is essential. The list will initially be limited, recognizing the realities of worldwide secretarial staff shortages, the length of time required for language training, and the need to keep vacancies to a minimum. The intent is to build the program gradually and keep it apart from the legally required officer LDP system.

As another step to meet secretarial needs, State officials also plan to ask the FSI to test the fluency level of secretaries at posts abroad. State is also beginning to provide limited hard language training to a few secretaries. Recently, for example, limited training has been provided in Arabic, Czech, Chinese and Serbo-Croatian.

ICA and AID have already designated secretarial LDPs, though on a very limited scale. ICA has designated 10 secretarial LDPs, but all are in Latin Amercia at the S-2/R-2 level. Only 4 of the 10 incumbents have even partial proficiency. AID has designated 58 staff LDPs primarily in Africa and Latin America. Forty-nine of these positions require an S-2 proficiency, 9 require an S-3 proficiency. FAS can designate secretarial positions as language essential at the S-1+/R-1 level.

OTHER AGENCIES SHOULD FORMALIZE SYSTEMS FOR IDENTIFYING LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Although only a few agencies have formal systems for identifying language requirements, many other agencies also have positions overseas which require language skills. Through our questionnaire sent to 28 agencies, we learned of 625 overseas positions reported as requiring language skills in agencies without formal systems for identifying position language requirements.

In Latin America, such agencies had personnel stationed in the four countries visited. Although some did not have large staffs, in total, these agencies accounted for about 25 percent of the U.S. personnel in those countries. We met with representatives of most of these agencies in one or more of the countries visited. Practically everyone said

that language proficiency was essential in their work for such activities as lecturing in Spanish, speaking and writing to host country nationals on a daily basis, and supervising host country nationals. While each representative believed Spanish proficiency was essential, representatives from only one agency knew the specific language requirement for their jobs or if a requirement existed. Lacking any specific, measurable language requirement, we could not determine whether these agencies' staffs had adequate language skills. Almost all persons contacted claimed they did, although few had been formally tested. However, we noted at least two cases where personnel did not.

A person working with one of the agencies in Latin America said he was sent to a post without adequate proficiency to perform his work. As a result, he was unable to converse with foreign national employees and was relegated to performing technical duties not requiring communication with Spanish-speaking colleagues.

In addition, a Marine security guard at one embassy said that some Marines lack adequate proficiency. All Marine guards are to receive 100 hours of language training after arrival at post, but this is sometimes too late. For example, one Marine answering an embassy telephone received a bomb threat. Lacking adequate proficiency, the Marine did not understand the message, and precious minutes were lost locating someone who understood the language. According to a Marine Sergeant, if the guard had been proficient in the local language, he could have responded promptly to the threat and may have been able to trace the telephone call. (Fortunately, there was no bomb.)

CONCLUSIONS

Language requirements at overseas posts are understated. Only four civilian agencies and the Defense Department have systems for formally identifying language needs. Existing criteria for designating language positions are general and the final decision about which positions should be LDPs is still left to the judgment of the top agency official at the post. Agency officials were not able to identify any more specific criteria which could have worldwide application and still meet the needs of individual posts which vary tremendously in size and mission. They believed current systems and guidance were adequate.

Nonetheless, other factors, such as costs of training and fear of not filling post vacancies, influenced LDP designations. In addition, some agencies placed artificial limitations preventing the true designation of position

requirements. These limitations included prohibitions against designating officer positions above certain levels and against designating any secretarial positions.

We recognize that the above-noted factors--budgetary considerations, fears of post vacancies, and artificial limitations on designations--may be legitimate reasons why LDPs are not adequately staffed. We firmly believe, however, these factors should not influence the identification of language requirements. We believe that because of these factors, true language needs are understated.

The understatement has a triple effect. Firstly, it could adversely affect the resources--time, money, and people--devoted to language training. Secondly, an officer who is already qualified in a language may not receive strong enough consideration for a position, if assignment personnel do not know the language is actually required for the job. Thirdly, an understated requirement does not provide a valid baseline against which to measure LDP compliance (see chapter 2) and agency progress in meeting language needs.

We recognize the difficulties in identifying worldwide LDP standards, but believe agency officials should take a closer look when identifying and approving individual language positions. While we concur that the Chiefs of Mission should have a major role in language decisions, we believe the current system requires more consistent and conscientious coordination between posts and headquarters. Only job needs should be considered, and artificial prohibitions against identifying actual requirements should be eliminated.

We believe that the Chief of Mission should play a more active role in identifying and reviewing all language requirements for all agencies, at that post. The Chief of Mission is responsible for directing, coordinating and supervising all U.S. Government employees in that country, except for those under a U.S. area military commander. Each agency then, should provide the post with feedback on LDP decisions.

Finally, we believe that many other agencies, besides those which already have a system for identifying language needs, have requirements for language skilled people overseas. Because these agencies have no system for identifying their needs, total U.S. requirements abroad have been understated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of State and the Director of ICA

--base LDPs and their proficiency level exclusively on job needs and not compromise requirements by extraneous factors;

--eliminate artificial prohibitions against designating positions above certain levels;

--arrange for periodic independent review, such as by representatives of the Office of Inspector General of post language needs;

--identify all secretarial positions which require world and hard language skills, and establish a formal and more comprehensive program of language training for secretaries; and

--direct the Chiefs of Mission to identify and review language needs for all agencies at that post and report such needs to a focal point within the Department of State.

We also recommend that the heads of agencies with personnel abroad and no formal LDP system direct their chief personnel officers to review their overseas positions to determine if any require language skills. If so, they should establish a formal system for identifying and filling them with employees with the required language skills. The agencies to which this recommendation is directed are listed in Group I, appendix V.

We also recommend that the Secretary of State summarize the language needs, which would include the needs as reported by the Chiefs of Mission, for purposes of coordinating with the Department of Education in an effort to determine and meet the U.S. Government requirements for foreign languages worldwide. Since the U.S. Government provides grants through the Department of Education to meet the national needs for foreign languages and area studies, it is proper for U.S. Government needs to be considered in making these grants.

CHAPTER 6

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING NEEDED TO IMPROVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES

The legislative changes and the additional funding needed to improve the foreign language capabilities of a large number of agencies were of particular concern to a number of Congressmen. Our questionnaire which was submitted to Federal agencies contained a section on those matters. Only 1 of the 15 responses from agencies or suborganizational units with overseas LDPs felt that its current statutory authority was not adequate. Several agencies estimated that an additional $34 million would be required to fill all LDPs at the required proficiency level by the end of fiscal year 1980.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

In addition to asking for needed legislative changes, we also asked agencies in our questionnaire to cite their legislative authority to provide foreign language training or otherwise meet their needs for language skills. Only 6 of the 15 (40 percent) agencies or sub-units cited specific legislation for foreign language training or for meeting the need for language skills.

Only one of those six respondents felt that its legislative authority was not adequate. Officials of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service--a part of the Department of Agriculture--stated that they believed current rules as contained in P.L. 94-449 do not allow travel reimbursements for spouses and dependents. So while they can reimburse an employee to travel to a foreign language training facility for training, according to APHIS' interpretation of the current rules, the spouses and dependents must wait until they are transferred overseas and then use the post language program.

We also noted in the APHIS response to our questionnaire that during 1979 the agency provided language training for 16 employees and 5 dependents.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS NEEDED

Several agencies provided estimates of the increased funding needed to fill all LDPs at the required proficiency level. The estimated total is over $34 million as shown in the following table.

Agency	Student salaries, books and tuition	Travel, per diem and allowance	Additional instructor costs	Expanded instructional facilities	Additional staff cost	Other	Total
	(000 omitted)						
ICA	$ 467	$ 10				$ 50	$ 527
APHIS	49	8			24	50	131
AID	4,205	1,465					5,670
State	5,763	850	602	200	170	620 (note a)	8,205
DOD	5,100	400	2,200	6,000	4,100	2,100 (note b)	19,900
Total	$15,584	$2,733	$2,802	$6,200	$4,294	$2,820	$34,433

a/In-country training $320
Post Language program $300

b/Re-enlistment bonuses $1,800
Materials and equipment $ 300.

Some of the agencies pointed out that the $34 million was not a one time additional investment, but that for a number of years--3 to 5--increased investments would be needed to significantly alleviate language training problems.

In addition to the money, agencies also estimated that another 182 positions would be necessary to adequately fill LDPs. State estimated 170 positions; FAS, 11 (although they did not estimate any funding); and AID, 1 position.

The Foreign Service Institute also contends that more classroom space is needed to accommodate language classes. FSI officials attribute the space problem to increases in classes and students, making it difficult to supervise instruction, provide administrative support and ensure adequate classroom conditions. FSI officials recognize that due to cost reimbursment arrangements with other agencies the space problem is not necessarily a cost problem, however, a shortage of available classroom and administrative space hinders expansion of language instruction by FSI.

CONCLUSIONS

Most agencies do not feel a need to change their current legislation authorizing foreign language training or their basis for language postions. However, several do estimate that over $34 million is currently needed to raise their agencies' rate of filling LDPs to the required proficiency level.

CHAPTER 7

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Our review of U.S. policies and procedures on language training for U.S. employees included detailed audit work at Washington, D.C., agencies, and audit work at embassies or consulates overseas. As requested by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, our review focused primarily on personnel stationed overseas, as opposed to personnel requiring language proficiency but stationed in the United States. Assisting us in all phases of the review was a career foreign service officer from the State Department who had served at several overseas posts and was a staff member on the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies that recently studied language training in the United States.

By way of gaining background information, we reviewed legislative developments in the area and reports by the President's Commission and the Rand Corporation.

Our detailed audit work was done at 7 agencies in Washington, D.C., with all other stateside data gathered through a questionnaire sent to 28 agencies. The seven agencies--Departments of State, Agriculture, Defense, and Justice; Agency for International Development; International Communication Agency; and Peace Corps--were selected because of the number of their positions overseas and the importance of their missions abroad. Work at these agencies consisted of interviews with agency officials and review of records pertaining to language programs, staffing assignments, and training procedures. We did not review or analyze records of specific intelligence-related programs in DOD and CIA. We did however, obtain some general information on the overall language requirements in DOD.

The questionnaire was designed to survey the need for positions requiring language proficiency and the additional cost required to fill such positions. The 28 departments and agencies receiving the questionnaire were selected after preliminary analysis and interviews indicated where the most likely needs for foreign languages were located. All agencies responded to the questionnaire. In fact many departments and agencies provided individual responses for sub-agencies, or offices, which were responsible for separate missions requiring some language proficiency. Therefore, we received 48 separate responses to our questionaire.

Work overseas was done at U.S. Embassies and Consulates in 12 countries: Poland, Greece, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Korea,

Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Colombia. These countries were selected because they represent a variety of languages and several U.S. agencies have personnel there who require some language proficiency. We interviewed U.S. personnel overseas who had, and had not, met the required proficiency levels, persons in positions not requiring language proficiency, post language officers, and Deputy Chiefs of Mission. We also reviewed records pertaining to post language needs and language training programs.

We discussed the contents of this report with the principal agencies involved and included their comments as appropriate. In general they were in agreement with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

APPENDIX I

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS PRESCRIBED LANGUAGE DESIGNATED POSITIONS

WORLD LANGUAGES:

DANISH	--	Denmark		
DUTCH	--	Belgium		
		Netherlands		
		Surinam		
FRENCH	--	Algeria		
		Belgium		
		Benin		
		Burundi		
		Cameroon		
		Canada		
		Chad		
		Congo		
		Ethiopia		
		France		
		Gabon		
		Greece		
		Guinea		
		Haiti		
		Ivory Coast		
		Laos		
		Lebanon		
		Luxembourg		
		Malagasy Republic		
		Mali		
		Martinique		
		Mauritania		
		Mauritius		
		Morocco		
		Niger		
		Rwanda		
		Senegal		
		Switzerland		
		Togo		
		Tunisia		
		Upper Volta		
		Zaire		
GERMAN	--	Austria		
		Germany		
		Switzerland		
ITALIAN	--	Italy		
NORWEGIAN	--	Norway		
PORTUGUESE	--	Azores		
		Brazil		
		Cape Verde		
		Mozambique		
		Portugal		
		Portuguese Guinea		
SPANISH	--	Argentina		
		Bolivia		
		Canada		
		Chile		
		Colombia		
		Costa Rica		
		Cuba		
		Dominican Republic		
		Ecuador		
		El Salvador		
		Guatemala		
		Honduras		
		Mexico		
		Nicaragua		
		Panama		
		Paraguay		
		Peru		
		Spain		
		Uruguay		
		Venezuela		
SWEDISH	--	Sweden		

HARD LANGUAGES:

AFRIKAANS --	South Africa	HUNGARIAN	Hungary
AMHARIC --	Ethiopia	ICELANDIC	Iceland
ARABIC -- (Eastern)	Egypt	INDONESIAN	Indonesia
	Iraq		
	Israel	JAPANESE	Japan
	Jordan		
	Kuwait	KOREAN	Korea
	Lebanon		
	Libya	LAO	Laos
	Oman		
	Qatar	MALAY	Malaysia
	Saudi Arabia		
	Sudan	NEPALI	Nepal
	Syria 1/		
	United Arab Emirates	PERSIAN (AFGHAN)	Afghanistan
	Yemen		
		PERSIAN (Iranian)	Iran
		PILIPINO/ TAGALOG	Philippines
BENGALI	Bangladesh		
	India		
		POLISH	Poland
BULGARIAN	Bulgaria		
		ROMANIAN	Romania
BURMESE	Burma		
		RUSSIAN	Russia
CHINESE (Mandarin)	Hong Kong 2/		
	Malaysia	SERBO-CROATIAN	Yugoslavia
	People's Republic of China 2/	SWAHILI	Kenya
	Taiwan		Tanzania
CZECH	Czechoslovakia	THAI	Thailand
FINNISH	Finland	TURKISH	Greece
			Turkey
GREEK	Greece		
		URDU	Pakistan
HEBREW	Israel		
HINDI	India		

1/Arabic (modern standard) is also spoken in Syria.

2/Chinese (Cantonese) is also spoken in Hong Kong and People's Republic of China.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUMMARY ANALYSIS DEPICTING HOW WELL AGENCIES ARE FILLING LANGUAGE DESIGNATED POSITIONS OVERSEAS

Agency	Authorized	Filled	Filled at required proficiency level	Percent filled at required level to total filled
Department of Defense (note a)	13,597	10,752	7,333	68
Department of State	1,320	1,216	858	71
Agency for International Development	687	541	394	73
International Communication Agency	421	396	276	70
Drug Enforcement Administration	204	194	189	97
Internal Revenue Service	168	168	168	100
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	112	90	73	81
Peace Corps	72	64	56	88
Foreign Agricultural Service	60	59	21	36
Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys	20	19	19	100
Federal Bureau of Investigation	19	19	17	89
Center For Disease Control	18	15	14	93
U.S. Travel Service	11	10	10	100
Secret Service	1	1	1	100

a/Department of Defense figures represent domestic and overseas positions.

APPENDIX III

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUMMARY ANALYSIS DEPICTING HOW WELL LANGUAGE DESIGNATED POSITIONS ARE FILLED BY LANGUAGE (note a)

	Total LDPs Authorized	Total LDPs Filled	LDPs adequately filled	
			Number	Percent of all filled
WORLD LANGUAGES:				
Danish	9	9	3	33
Dutch	12	12	6	50
French	814	661	454	69
German	183	174	125	72
Italian	81	76	37	49
Norwegian	10	10	5	50
Portuguese	126	121	73	60
Spanish	1,228	1,117	919	82
Swedish	10	8	2	25
HARD LANGUAGES:				
Afrikaans	1	1	1	100
Amharic	1	1	1	100
Arabic	83	78	33	42
Bengali	2	2	2	100
Bulgarian	7	6	5	83
Burmese	8	6	4	67
Chinese	31	30	18	60
Czech	11	10	6	60
Finnish	7	7	6	86
Greek	21	19	13	68
Hebrew	6	6	2	33
Hindi	3	1	0	0
Hungarian	11	9	6	67
Icelandic	1	1	0	0
Indonesian	62	55	30	55
Japanese	44	41	28	68
Korean	13	12	4	33
Lao	2	2	1	50
Macedonian (note b)	1	1	1	100
Malay	3	2	0	0
Nepali	2	2	0	0
Persian (Afghan)	5	4	1	25
Persian (Iranian)	12	8	3	38
Pilipino	6	6	2	33
Polish	33	32	19	59
Romanian	18	16	9	56
Russian	67	63	33	52
Serbo-Croatian	31	30	24	80
Slovenian (note b)	1	1	0	0
Swahili	7	5	2	40
Thai	46	43	34	79
Turkish	41	38	20	53
Urdu	9	9	7	78

a/Department of Defense language positions are not included hereon.
b/International Communication Agency designated positions.

LISTING OF AGENCIES WHICH RECEIVED GAO QUESTIONNAIRE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEEDS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. ACTION - Peace Corps
2. Agency for International Development
3. Central Intelligence Agency
4. Civil Aeronautics Board
5. Department of Agriculture
6. Department of Commerce
7. Department of Defense
8. Department of Energy
9. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
10. Department of Housing and Urban Development
11. Department of the Interior
12. Department of Justice
13. Department of Labor
14. Department of State
15. Department of Transportation
16. Department of Treasury
17. Environmental Protection Agency
18. Export-Import Bank of the United States
19. Federal Reserve System
20. General Services Administration
21. International Communication Agency
22. Library of Congress
23. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
24. National Endowment for the Humanities
25. National Science Foundation
26. Overseas Private Investment Corporation
27. United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
28. United States Postal Service

APPENDIX V

LISTING OF AGENCIES RESPONDING TO GAO QUESTIONNAIRE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEEDS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

GROUP I: RESPONDENTS WITH OVERSEAS LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL JOBS (some also have domestic LDPs):

1. Agency for International Development
2. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (Agriculture)
3. Center for Disease Control (HEW)
4. Central Intelligence Agency
5. Department of Defense
6. Department of State
7. Drug Enforcement Administration (Justice)
8. Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (Justice)
9. Federal Bureau of Investigation (Justice)
10. Foreign Agricultural Service (Agriculture)
11. Internal Revenue Service (Treasury)
12. International Communication Agency
13. Peace Corps
14. U.S. Secret Service (Treasury)
15. U.S. Travel Service (Commerce)

GROUP II: RESPONDENTS WITH DOMESTIC LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL JOBS (none overseas):

16. Bureau of Prisons (Justice)
17. Department of Energy
18. Department of Housing and Urban Development
19. Export-Import Bank of the United States
20. Foreign Service Institute (State)
21. General Services Administration
22. Immigration and Naturalization Service (Justice)
23. Library of Congress
24. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (Transportation)
25. National Library of Medicine (HEW)
26. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Commerce)
27. Office of Education (HEW)
28. Office of Inspector General (Transportation)
29. Public Health Service (HEW)
30. Social Security Administration (HEW)
31. Urban Mass Transit Administration (Transportation)
32. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Interior)
33. U.S. Postal Service

GROUP III: RESPONDENTS WITH NO LANGUAGE ESSENTIAL JOBS:

34. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
35. Civil Aeronautics Board
36. Customs Service (Treasury)
37. Department of Labor
38. Environmental Protection Agency
39. Federal Reserve System
40. Industry and Trade Administration (Commerce)
41. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (Justice)
42. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
43. National Endowment for the Humanities
44. National Science Foundation
45. Office of Assistant Secretary for International Affairs (Treasury)
46. Office of Human Development Services (HEW)
47. Overseas Private Investment Corporation
48. U.S. Geological Survey (Interior)

QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED TO 28 AGENCIES

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Survey Of Federal Practices And Procedures For
Staffing Positions That Require Foreign Language Skills

INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is being used to gather information for a GAO review of Federal practices and procedures for staffing positions that require foreign language skills. It asks for information on the policies, procedures and practices which govern your organization's designation of foreign language positions; recruitment of employees with foreign language skills; foreign language training; and the assignment of employees with foreign language skills. We are also interested in your recommendations for any statutory changes necessary to upgrade the language capabilities of your employees.

Most of the questions can be answered by checking a box or entering a small amount of written information.

A preaddressed return envelope has been enclosed with the questionnaire. We ask that the questionnaire be completed and returned by January 11, 1980. If you will have difficulty in meeting this date or have any questions about the questionnaire or the review, please call either Mr. David R. Warren or Mr. Galen Goss at (202) 632-8786.

In the event that the return envelope is misplaced, the correct return address is:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Room 4824
Attention: Mr. David R. Warren
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Thank you for your cooperation in the review.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Name of Organization: _____

_____

Name of Person Who May be Contacted for Clarification, if Necessary:

_____

Telephone Number: _____
(Area Code) (Number)

I. Criteria For Language Designated Positions:

In this part of the questionnaire we are interested in obtaining information on the special needs of your organization for language proficient personnel, and the criteria used to identify language designated positions and set proficiency levels.

1. Some organizations have designated specific positions as requiring the knowledge of a foreign language in order to adequately perform assigned duties. Throughout this questionnaire such positions will be referred to as Language Designated Positions (LDP's). How many such language designated positions are there in your organization? If none, please write "none" and go to section II.

_____
No. of LDP's

2. There are many reasons why Federal employees may need to know a foreign language. In your organization, about what percent of the positions designated as language essential have been so designated primarily for each of the following reasons? (An estimate is sufficient. Please do not perform any extensive research.) (Please check one column for each row.)

Knowledge of a foreign language is necessary to:	Less than 10 percent	10 to 30 percent	31 to 60 percent	Over 60 percent
Supervise foreign employees				
Deal with the general public in a foreign country				
Understand significant public pronouncements in a foreign language				
Interpret for senior mission personnel or high-level official visitors				
Read written material in a foreign language				
Monitor translations by foreign nationals				
Collect information for intelligence purposes				
Other (Please specify.) _____ _____				

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3. Is there a central unit or group which identifies your organization's future requirements for language designated positions, or is that responsibility carried out by program or post or site management? (Check one.)

   1. ☐ Central unit
   2. ☐ Program management
   3. ☐ Post or site management
   4. ☐ Other (Please describe.) _____

   _____

4. If performed by a central unit is that work performed in conjunction with the recruitment, training, and assignment offices, or is it performed as a separate function?

   1. ☐ In conjunction with recruitment, training, and assignment
   2. ☐ As a separate function
   3. ☐ Other (Please describe.) _____

   _____

5. How often, if at all, does your organization reevaluate the need for language designated positions? (Please check only one.)

   1. ☐ Annually
   2. ☐ Every 2 to 3 years
   3. ☐ When the incumbent leaves a position
   4. ☐ Never
   5. ☐ Other (Please explain. _____

   _____

   _____

6. The Foreign Service Institute has developed a standardized scale for measuring levels of language proficiency.

   0--no practical proficiency

   1--elementary proficiency

   2--limited working proficiency

   3--minimum professional proficiency

   4--full professional proficiency

   5--native or bilingual proficiency

   Does your organization use this scale for measuring the proficiency of your employees in foreign languages?

   1. ☐ Yes (Please skip to question 11.)
   2. ☐ No

7. If no, does your organization use another scale for measuring foreign language proficiency or are employees categorized as proficient or not proficient?

   1. ☐ Another scale
   2. ☐ Proficient or not proficient

8. If your organization uses another scale do you use separate scales for measuring proficiency in reading and speaking?

   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ No

9. As stated above, the Foreign Service Institute uses a 5-point scale to measure language proficiency. How many gradations are there on the scale your organization uses to measure proficiency in a foreign language?

   _____
   (No. of gradations)

10. By what method does your organization determine or establish an employee's level of proficiency in a specific foreign language?

    1. ☐ Test administered by this organization
    2. ☐ Test administered by the organization that provided foreign language training to the employee
    3. ☐ Supervisory evaluations
    4. ☐ Employee self-appraisal
    5. ☐ Successful completion of training course
    6. ☐ Other method(s) (Please describe.)

    _____

    _____

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11. How important is each of the following factors in setting the foreign language proficiency level required for positions in your organization requiring foreign language skills? (Please check one column for each row.)

	Not important	Important	Very important
1. Extent of contact with foreign nationals			
2. Degree of proficiency a person can normally be expected to achieve within a given level of training			
3. Extent to which English is spoken as a second language in a country			
4. Extent of vocabulary necessary for conducting business			
5. Other important factors (Please specify.) _____			

12. Does your organization have written criteria for determining which positions should be considered Language Designated Positions (LDP's)?

1. ☐ Yes (If yes, please attach a copy when returning this questionnaire.)

2. ☐ No

II. Recruitment of Employees with Foreign Language Skills

Here we are interested in determining if your organization is able to recruit and hire employees with the necessary language skills.

13. It may sometimes be necessary to fill some Language Designated Positions with personnel who do not possess the desired level of foreign language proficiency. For some other positions, however, the importance of foreign language proficiency to the adequate performance of duties is so great that only someone with the required foreign language proficiency would be assigned to the position. Does your organization have any positions in this latter category?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No

3. ☐ Not sure

14. If yes, how many such positions are there in your organization?

_____ (No. of positions)

15. Apart from general personnel ceilings and budgetary restrictions, does your organization have problems in recruiting personnel with language skills?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No (If no, please go to Section III.)

16. If yes, how great a problem is each of the following factors in recruiting foreign language skilled personnel? (Please check one column for each row.)

	Little or no problem	Slight problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem
Lack of people with training in the required language skills in the employment market					
Difficulty of finding people with the combination of professional and language skills needed					
Complications due to Federal hiring regulations and procedures					
Difficulty of finding people with a high enough level of proficiency in a foreign language					
Other (Please specify.) _____					

III. Language Training:

In this portion of the questionnaire we are interested in the policies, procedures and practices regarding language training for both employees and dependents; where that training is provided; how language proficient personnel are tested; and how the agency keeps track of them.

17. Does your organization provide any foreign language training to its employees, either directly or through arrangements with other Federal agencies or commercial or academic institutions?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No (If no, please go to question 30.)

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18. There are many circumstances under which an organization might provide foreign language training to its employees. Please indicate by checking the appropriate box whether each of the following occasions is one in which your organization would provide foreign language training to its employees. (Please check yes or no for each.)

	Yes	No
1. When an employee without desired language proficiency is assigned to a language designated position	☐	☐
2. When an employee needs help to retain a language skill	☐	☐
3. When an employee requests foreign language training	☐	☐
4. When it is necessary to increase the organization's capability in a particular language because of anticipated changes in organization responsibilities	☐	☐
5. When an employee is assigned to a position which is not language designated, but for which foreign language skills would be desirable	☐	☐

19. Please list any other typical circumstances under which foreign language training is provided to employees.

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. Does your organization provide foreign language training for spouses or dependents of employees? (Check as many as apply.)

1. ☐ Yes, for spouses
2. ☐ Yes, for dependents
3. ☐ No (If no, please skip to question 23.)

21. If yes, under which of the following circumstances does your organization provide foreign language training for spouses or dependents? (Please check yes or no for each.)

	Yes	No
1. When there is space available in classes set up for employees	☐	☐
2. When spouse or dependent, age 18 or over, is going to accompany employee overseas	☐	☐
3. To enable spouse or dependent to contribute to the organization's mission	☐	☐

22. Please list any other typical circumstances under which foreign language training would be provided to spouses or dependents.

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. During FY 1979 was any of the foreign language training provided to employees provided through arrangements with commercial or academic institutions?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No (If no, please skip to question 26.)

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24. Now, please consider the occasions during FY 1979 in which foreign language training was provided by a commercial or academic source. How often in those occasions was each of the following the primary reason the training was obtained from a commercial or academic rather than a government source? (Check one column for each row.)

	Always or almost always	Most of the time	About half of the time	Occasionally	Never or almost never
Commercial or academic classes were more conveniently located					
Commercial or academic classes were offered at the time employee needed to take them					
Commercial or academic facilities offered the required language whereas Government facilities didn't					
Commercial or academic facilities were less costly					
Commercial or academic facilities offered higher quality instruction than was available through Government facilities					
Commercial or academic facilities provided highly specialized vocabulary not covered in a Government course					
Student's proficiency in the language required specialized instruction					

25. What percentage (in dollar terms) of arrangements with commercial institutions in FY 1979 were made under open-ended interagency contract?

_____%

26. Does your organization have any written policies or procedures regarding the use of Federal and non-Federal organizations to provide foreign language training for organization employees?

1. ☐ Yes (If yes, please attach a copy when returning this questionnaire.)
2. ☐ No

27. Is a foreign language aptitude test given to employees prior to their receiving foreign language training.

1. ☐ Yes, always
2. ☐ Yes, sometimes
3. ☐ No (If no, please skip to question 29.)

28. If yes, are the results of the aptitude test used in determining whether or not the employee will receive the training, in determining the extent of training needed, or in both ways? (Please check one.)

1. ☐ In determining whether or not to train
2. ☐ In determining the extent of training needed
3. ☐ In both of the above listed ways

29. Are employees who have taken foreign language training tested as soon as they complete the course?

1. ☐ Yes, in all, or almost all cases
2. ☐ Yes, in some cases
3. ☐ No

30. Does your organization have a general policy of testing an employee's proficiency in a foreign language before the employee begins to serve in a language designated position?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No (If no, please skip to question 32.)

31. If yes, is such testing usually carried out immediately prior to the employee's assuming the duties of the language designated position or prior to being selected for the position? (Please check one.)

1. ☐ Immediately prior to assuming duties
2. ☐ Prior to being selected for position

32. Are all, or most, employees with foreign language skills tested periodically regardless of their assignment at the time?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

33. If yes, how frequently is such testing carried out? (Please check one.)

1. ☐ Annually
2. ☐ Every two years
3. ☐ Every three to five years
4. ☐ Other (Please specify.)

_____

_____

34. Does your organization have any written policies or procedures concerning the testing of foreign language proficiency of employees?

1. ☐ Yes (If yes, please attach a copy when returning this questionnaire.)
2. ☐ No

35. Does your organization maintain a centralized inventory or listing of all employees with foreign language skills including the particular language(s) in which each is skilled?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No (If no, please skip to 38.)

36. If yes, does that listing include employees who are not currently serving in language designated positions?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

37. When a vacancy exists in a language designated position, is the inventory or listing consulted in order to identify possible candidates for the vacancy?

1. ☐ Yes, always
2. ☐ Yes, sometimes
3. ☐ No

38. In selecting employees to fill a typical language designated position in your organization, is foreign language proficiency given more weight than, less weight than, or about equal weight to the non-foreign language requirements of the position? (Please check only one.)

1. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given more weight
2. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given about equal weight
3. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given less weight

39. How far in advance of their reporting date are employees typically notified of their assignment to language designated positions?

1. ☐ Less than 6 months in advance
2. ☐ 6 to 12 months in advance
3. ☐ 13 to 18 months in advance
4. ☐ Over 18 months in advance
5. ☐ Not applicable - no language designated positions

IV. Utilization of Employees with Foreign Language Skills:

The following questions are concerned with organizational policies and practices designed to encourage employees to acquire and maintain language skills. We are also interested in problems associated with retaining language proficient individuals.

40. Does your organization offer employees with-in-grade pay increases for foreign language proficiency?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

41. Does your organization offer other monetary incentives to foreign language proficient employees?

1. ☐ No
2. ☐ Yes (Please specify.) _____

_____

_____

42. Does your organization offer any other non-monetary incentives to employees to acquire and/or maintain foreign language proficiency?

1. ☐ No
2. ☐ Yes (Please specify.) _____

_____

_____

43. Is foreign language proficiency a factor in considering an employee for promotion?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

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44. In assessing a typical language-proficient employee's potential for career advancement in your organization, is foreign language proficiency given more weight than, less weight than, or about equal weight to the other professional skills of the employee? (Please check only one.)

1. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given more weight
2. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given about equal weight
3. ☐ Foreign language proficiency is given less weight

45. About how many foreign language-qualified employees left your organization in FY 1979?

_____ (Number)

46. Do you consider this level of attrition a significant problem?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

V. Cost of Upgrading Employees' Language Skills:

47. How great a problem, if any, is each of the following in filling your positions requiring proficiency with "world" languages; i.e., French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish? (Please check one column for each row.)

	Little or no problem	Small problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem
Too little money available for language training					
Difficulty in releasing employees for training					
Too few personnel to allow individuals to take extended periods of time for language training					
Other (Please specify.) _____					

48. How great a problem, if any, is each of the following in filling your organization's positions requiring proficiency in other languages than the "world" languages referred to in question 47? (Please check one column for each row.)

	Little or no problem	Small problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem
Too little money available for language training					
Difficulty in releasing employees for training					
Too few personnel to allow individuals to take extended periods of time for language training					
Other (Please specify.) _____					

49. Please estimate how much in additional funding above your organization's FY 1980 already budgeted amount for foreign language training would be required to fill all language designated positions in the organization with persons having the desired level of foreign language proficiency by the end of FY 1980. Please provide additional details concerning this estimate by showing the estimated amount that would be needed in each of the categories listed below as well as any others that are appropriate.

Cost category	Amount needed
Student salaries, books and tuition	$_____
Appropriate travel, per diem, and allowances	_____
Additional instructors	_____
Expanded instructional facilities	_____
Additional positions needed to allow greater numbers of personnel to attend training for a longer period of time	_____
Additional staff and student positions required for programs impacting on effective utilization of foreign language related programs, e.g., assignment, training, and testing programs?	_____
Other categories (Please list.)	
_____	_____
_____	_____
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	_____

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VI. Statutory Changes:

Congress specifically expressed interest in learning of statutory changes needed to improve the language proficiency of Federal personnel. In this section of the questionnaire we are interested in obtaining information on statutes relating to foreign language capabilities in Federal agencies and any changes you feel are needed to increase your organization's foreign language capabilities.

50. Please provide in the space below legislative citations, if any, referring to language training or the need for language skills that are pertinent to your organization.

51. Do you feel that the statutory authority your organization now has is adequate to provide your organization with the language-qualified people it needs?

1. ☐ Yes (If yes, please skip to question 53.)

2. ☐ No

52. If no, please cite existing legislation and describe either specifically or in general the changes you would like to see.

VII. Other Comments

53. If you have any comments relating to the foreign language requirements of Federal agencies or any other comments concerning Federal practices and procedures for filling positions requiring language skills, please add them here. Please complete the attached tables where applicable. Thank you for your cooperation.

GAO note: Questionnaire included 12 tables not shown in this appendix.

APPENDIX VII

PRIOR GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORTS AND OTHER STUDIES RELATED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING

Prior GAO Reports:

"Need to Improve Language Training Programs and Assignments for U.S. Government Personnel Overseas" (B-176049, Jan. 22, 1973)

"Improvement Needed in Language Training and Assignments for U.S. Personnel Overseas" (ID-76-19, June 16, 1976)

"Need to Improve Foreign Language Training Programs and Assignments for Department of Defense Personnel" (ID-76-73, Nov. 24, 1976)

"Study of Foreign Languages and Related Areas:
--Federal Support
--Administration
--Need" (ID-78-46, Sept. 13, 1978)

Other Studies:

"Foreign Language and International Studies Specialists: The Marketplace and National Policy," Prepared for the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Rand Corporation, R-2501-NEH, September 1979

"Strength Through Wisdom, A Critique of U.S. Capability," A Report to the President from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, November 1979, U.S. Government Printing Office, Stock #017-080-02065-3

"President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies: Background Papers and Studies," November 1979, U.S. Government Printing Office, Stock #017-080-02070-0

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